$2.25 January 31, 1997

COMMONWEAL

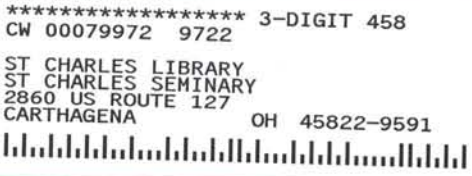
St. Charles Seminary Library
Carthagena, Ohio

JOHN ESPOSITO & DAVID BURRELL

ISLAM

********** 3-DIGIT 458
CW 00079972 9722

ST CHARLES LIBRARY
ST CHARLES SEMINARY
2860 US ROUTE 127
CARTHAGENA OH 45822-9591



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PAULIST PRESS — THE BEST IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

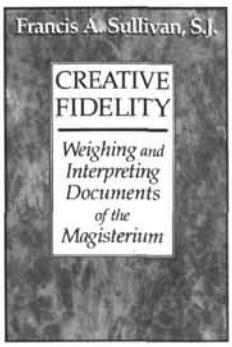
Christ
The Self-Emptying of God
Lucien Richard, O.M.I.
The Self-Emptying of God
A major theologian develops here a complete and systematic Christology that integrates the divine acts of creation, liberation, incarnation and redemption with the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.
0-8091-3668-6 $18.95

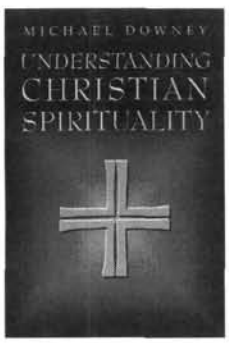
Christian Spirituality
Themes from the Tradition
Lawrence S. Cunningham and Keith J. Egan
A concise and accessible thematic overview of the various ways Christians have approached God in prayer and practice.
"With naturalness and serenity, it transplants spirituality from the precinct of the esoteric into the context of the daily and the ordinary....wonderful."
—Paul Philibert, O.P.
0-8091-3660-0 $14.95

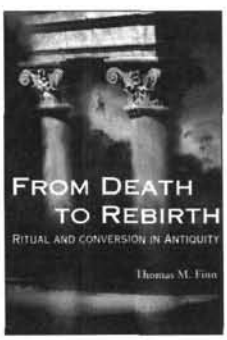
Creative Fidelity
Weighing and Interpreting
Documents of the Magisterium,
Francis A. Sullivan, SJ.
Deals with a basic step involved in doing theology in the Catholic tradition, namely, the evaluation and interpretation of documents issued by popes, councils and other organs of official teaching authority.
"...the Church owes a great debt of gratitude to the Jesuit theologian Francis Sullivan for his book CREATIVE FIDELITY.*"*
—THE TABLET, London
0-8091-3644-9 $14.95

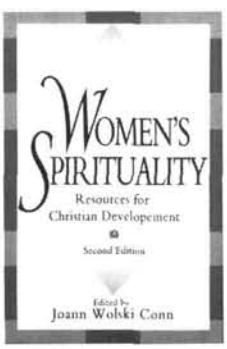
From Death to Rebirth
Ritual Conversion in Antiquity
Thomas M. Finn
Explores the meaning of conversion and ritual enactment of individual conversion in ancient Judaism, Christianity and pagan religions.
0-8091-3689-9 $18.95 (t) (April '97)

The Future of Eucharist
How a new self-awareness among Catholics is changing the way they believe and worship
Bernard Cooke
Describes how cultural and theological changes among American Catholics are beginning to change the way they celebrate the eucharist and their understanding of how the eucharist "works."
0-8091-3697-X $5.95









Is Jesus Unique?
A Study of Recent Christology
Scott Cowdell
A study of the christological trends of a quarter century, beginning from the mid-1960s, focusing in particular on how Jesus' uniqueness and finality have been treated by several different theologians.
"...you do justice, painstakingly, to the concerns of a whole generation of christologers..."
—Frans Jozef van Beeck, S.J.
0-8091-3628-7 $24.95

Keeping Hope Alive
Stirrings in Christian Theology
Dermot A. Lane
Explores eschatology and the hope of Christian life in light of new advances in anthropology, ecology, cosmology, and feminist thought.
"We are in profound debt to Dermot Lane for showing us, eloquently and compellingly, how belief in eternal life is not an appendix to Christian theology but is its center of gravity."
—Peter C. Phan
Professor of Systematic Theology
The Catholic University of America
0-8091-3684-8 $14.95

Understanding Christian Spirituality
Michael Downey
A readable overview of the contemporary spiritual scene that defines, outlines, and advocates several models or methods for studying Christian spirituality with a respect for Scripture, tradition and one's own personal and cultural experiences.
"I have been waiting for this kind of book...."
—Joann Wolski Conn
0-8091-3680-5 $12.95

Women's Spirituality
Resources for Christian Development
2nd edition
edited by Joann Wolski Conn
A thoroughly updated collection of essays that demonstrates how feminist issues are compatible with the best in current spirituality and theology as well as with great spiritual teachers.
0-8091-3656-2 $24.95

Available at bookstores or
PAULIST PRESS
997 Macarthur Blvd.
Mahwah, N.J. 07430
To order, call 1-800-218-1903 or FAX 1-800-836-3161; e-mail: paulistp@pipeline.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOUNDED 1924

COMMONWEAL

January 31, 1997 / Volume CXXIV, Number 2

UP FRONT

Correspondence *On gender and religion, different takes* 4

Editorials *Bad karma* 5

"Well, of course you haven't seen me in church lately. I converted to Buddhism."

Et ceteras
Neighborhood saints 6
Good questions 6
Research news 7
Reading Balasuriya 7

COLUMNIST

Two churches
Abigail McCarthy
Our columnist sees an unbridged gap between à la carte *and fixed-menu Catholicism.* 7

SHORT TAKES

Relativism in perspective
Francis X. Clooney
Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was recently reappointed for another term as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He is a busy man, in absolute terms, and now hopes to inoculate us against an epidemic of relativism. 9

THE LAST WORD

Amen! In sh' Allah!
Christian de Chergé
One monk's last testament on the possibility of martyrdom and the forgiveness of his murderer. 31

ARTICLES

THEOLOGY ISSUE

ISLAM & CHRISTIANITY FACE TO FACE
John L. Esposito
Muslims remember the Crusades and the era of colonialism. Christians focus on the threat of fanatical factions within Islam. To deal with today's political realities, both sides need to reflect on their own histories. 11

FRANCE & ALGERIA
Bernard G. Prusak 16

THE PILLARS OF ISLAMIC FAITH
David B. Burrell 17

A TALE OF TWO PRELATES
Desmond O'Grady 20

REMEMBERING THE MARTYRS
George Dardess 22

VERDICTS

BOOKS

Is There a God? *by Richard Swinburne*
Robert J. Egan 24

God Has Ninety-Nine Names *by Judith Miller*
Jack Fischel 27

"Sometimes I wonder if the Lord wouldn't be happier with fewer servants and more friends."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To the Editors

Thanks for honesty

I write with gratitude to John Shekleton and *Commonweal* for "Homosexuality and the Priesthood" [November 22, 1996]. The gratitude is from a sense of relief that someone could so eloquently move the discussion of homosexuality in the ordained priesthood off the "agenda of the rumor mill" and into the center of the mystery and grace of vocation itself, a call to "touch and change the lives of others."

That gay priests and lay Catholics have for so long served the church and the world while being told by the magisterium that their orientation, if not fundamentally disordered, is at least not anything they should talk about, sheds shameful light on the denial of how broken church teaching can be. Many heterosexual people as well should take pause to consider how cruel it is to gossip and conjecture about people who have been virtually forbidden to acknowledge their sexual orientation and what it means in terms of their vocation, even to their closest associates.

Shekleton's honesty about sexual denial being part of what moved him into ordained priesthood, together with his refusal to allow his vocation to be explained away as merely that, gives me renewed hope that a truer story of the mystery of the God we love so imperfectly can still be told.

ELLEN S. RYAN
Saint Paul, Minn.

Shoring up the peace

Over the years I have appreciated *Commonweal*'s fair portrayal of the situation in Israel/Palestine. The editorial "Undermining the Peace" [October 11, 1996] was yet another fine piece. I hope soon to read an update of the situation. Perhaps you could run a news story on the continuing land confiscation in Bethlehem and other Palestinian cities in the West Bank or about the often-ignored voices of the Israeli human rights and peace advocates (such as Gush Shalom, Peace Now, Religious Women for Peace, and Bat Shalom), who are constantly begging their government not to give in to the demands of a minority of settlers because that could only bring the loss of more lives.

CARRIE E. STAMBAUGH
Boxford, Mass.

Woodward off target

When Kenneth L. Woodward speaks of the "feminization of American Christianity" ["Gender & Religion: Who's Really Running the Show?" November 22, 1996], I think he is really talking about the breakdown of the patriarchal, hierarchical, dualistic model that has been the standard for most churches, Catholic and Protestant. Defending that model, Woodward finds ways of attributing everything he perceives as a weakness in contemporary church life to the presence and influence of women.

Woodward seems intimidated, for example, by the number of women entering seminary and by the fact (surprise, surprise) that they are having an influence there. After citing research that finds many women seminarians are middle-aged, divorced, or single mothers, he manages to suggest that these characteristics point to a lack of maturity in the students. In at least some cases, however, these same characteristics may be indicators of greater maturity born of experience.

According to Woodward, women who enter other professions such as medicine and law are changed by the professions, but do not change the professions. Does he believe that the drastic changes over the past thirty years in the way the law now deals with rape victims, or how medicine deals with breast cancer, heart disease, or giving birth came about because some enlightened man or men declared, "Gee, maybe we should be more sensitive about women's issues"? In fact, the changes in these professions occurred because women brought their own experiences into

(Continued on page 29)

They write the books on ministry

Catholic Theological Union's distinguished faculty write the leading books on ministry. Choose a program and study with the experts.

D. MIN.
M.A. PASTORAL STUDIES
M.A.THEOLOGY
M. DIV.

ISRAEL STUDY TRIPS
WORKSHOPS
SAT./EVENING CLASSES
SUMMER INSTITUTE
SABBATICALS

Certificates
SPIRITUALITY
LITURGY
PASTORAL STUDIES
CROSS-CULTURAL

CONTACT: *Keiren O'Kelly, M.Div., Admissions Director, 5401 S.Cornell Ave. Chicago, IL 60615 312.753.5316 FAX 312.324.8490*

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STAFF

Editor: **Margaret O'Brien Steinfels**
Executive Editor: **Paul Baumann**
Managing Editor: **Patrick Jordan**
Production Editor: **Jacqueline Dowdell**
Senior Writer: **Robert G. Hoyt**
Business Manager: **Richard Haas**
Poetry: **Rosemary Deen**
Design: **Emil Antonucci**
Screen: **Richard Alleva**
Media: **Frank McConnell**
Columnists: **John Garvey, Abigail McCarthy, David R. Carlin, Jr., Sidney Callahan**
Intern: **Bernard G. Prusak**
Staff: **Harriette Balsky, Carmen P. Alava, Sandra Smith**
Advertising Manager: **Ruth E. Taylor**
Publisher: **Edward S. Skillin**

Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly except Christmas/New Year's; and monthly July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, NY, 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, ME 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, NY 10038.

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest, and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, OH 44691. *Commonweal* articles also are available at many libraries and research facilities on CD-ROM and in electronic data bases. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional offices. Copyright © 1997 Commonweal Foundation. Single Copy, $2.25. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $44; Canada, $47; foreign, $50. Special two-year rate: U.S. $75; Canada, $81; foreign, $87. Annual rates for air-mail delivery outside U.S.: Western Hemisphere, $84; Europe, $89; other parts of the world, $99. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover, p. 32, Emil Antonucci; pp. 3, 26, Baloo, Rothco; p. 3, Kellas, Rothco; p. 6, Ross, Rothco; pp. 10, 20, Ray, Rothco; p. 17, Jean Charlot, p. 31, Rita Corbin; columnist portraits, Elaine Mills.

Bad karma

Excommunication sounds worse than it is—at least we hope that's true. Ideally, or so the technical definitions suggest, excommunication is a pastoral tool of last resort used both to protect the integrity of church teaching and to instruct the incorrigible in the error of their ways. Repentance and reconciliation are the goal; the explicit goal for those being punished, but equally the burden, one hopes, of those in positions of episcopal authority and trust.

Yes, truth must be defended. Yes, error can do damage. Yes, some errors are worthy of excommunication, and there is much teaching of the wayward to be done. But, as in most pedagogical exercises, masters and pupils often differ with regard to what exactly is being taught or communicated. As prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is one of the church's most formidable teachers, if not its most persuasive. Earlier this month the pope, on the recommendation of Ratzinger and the congregation, excommunicated (*latae sententiae*, or automatically) Sri Lankan liberation theologian Tissa Balasuriya, a priest of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, for heresy. Balasuriya's contumacy concerned his purported views on Original Sin, the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, papal infallibility, and the nature of salvation outside the church. According to news reports, Balasuriya's fifty-five page response to the CDF's questions seeking clarification of positions taken in his *Mary and Human Liberation* (1990) was judged "unsatisfactory." He was then asked to sign a profession of faith not only pledging loyalty to the pope but also endorsing the church's prohibition on the ordination of women. He refused.

This is a tragedy for Balasuriya *and* for the church. Balasuriya's more than forty years as a priest, his manifest concern for the poor, and his endeavors to bring Catholicism into a respectful dialogue with Asian religions (*see* Clooney, page 9) deserve the church's regard and thanks. (Balasuriya was an occasional contributor to this journal in the 1960s and '70s, *see* list on page 7.)

News of the excommunication will elicit predictable responses. Those who have cheered this papacy's policing of such theologians as Charles Curran, Hans Küng, and Leonardo Boff will rejoice at what appears to be an escalation in the penalties imposed on "dissent." Those who judge Ratzinger and the pope authoritarian throwbacks will tend to write off any disciplinary action by the magisterium as malicious and unwarranted.

Given the information available, it is unclear whether Balasuriya received a fair opportunity to answer the charges against him. Balasuriya asserts that his rights under canon law have been ignored, criticizes the "unilateral" nature of the CDF's role as both prosecutor and jury, and complains of prejudice against "Asian theologians." These are serious accusations requiring a Vatican response. It is especially troubling that Balasuriya was not given a face-to-face hearing in Rome by the CDF—and that his punishment is so much more severe than any comparable Vatican action in recent decades.

At the same time, it is important not to lump the action against Balasuriya carelessly together with disciplinary steps taken against theologians like Curran and

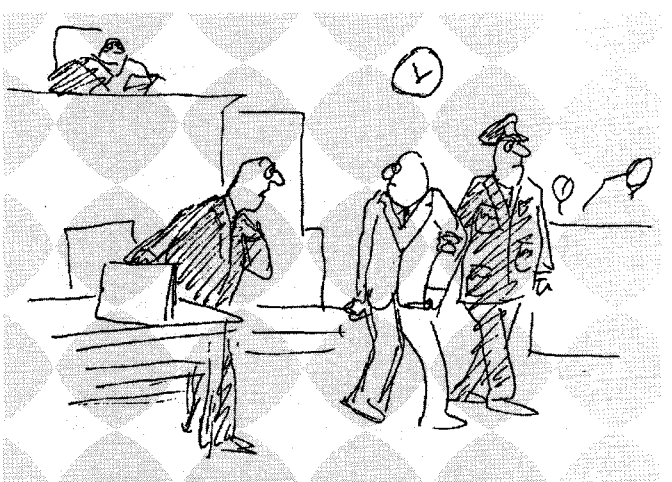
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Küng. It is significant, for example, that the Sri Lankan bishops had previously criticized Balasuriya's book, while Charles Curran's own bishop testified eloquently to his orthodoxy and fidelity. Nor is Balasuriya's credibility enhanced by the fact that he subsequently threatened to sue his bishops. His religious community has also distanced itself from the theologian's writings.

Bishops can make mistakes, but in the end Catholic theologians are accountable to the bishops. And, contrary to Balasuriya's defiant countercharge, Rome need not prove him "wrong in terms of contemporary theological scholarship," whatever that might mean. Neither an adversarial and rights-driven juridical process nor the positivist bias and moral agnosticism of the academy is an appropriate model for decision making in the church. When it comes to judging works of theology, both a defense of revelation and its cognate doctrines and the most creative theological expression must somehow be accommodated. Sadly, how that is done without the imposition of coercive oaths and the specter of secret interrogations has yet to be figured out. It is imperative that the church do so.

That said, the Vatican seems to be one of the last Western institutions resistant to the common-sense notion that any procedure that demonstrates a high regard for the rights of the accused enhances the credibility of its verdicts. The judgment of the CDF and the pope will remain less than persuasive until there is a public accounting of the process of excommunication. Not all such deliberations need to be made public, but the Vatican's penchant for secrecy is an invitation for prejudice, personal vendetta, hearsay, and self-serving ecclesiastical politics to distort the truth. And even when such a process is conducted properly, its secrecy still leaves the appearance of manipulation and injustice.

Does Balasuriya's excommunication signal a new round of heresy-hunting by a pope allergic to public dissent and clerical independence? Thirty years after Vatican II, *ressourcement* increasingly seems to mean an enthusiasm for some of the most dubious authoritarian methods of the past. Rome must learn a new way to say, "Wrong."



"Sorry, I'm afraid I'm not very good at this."

ET CETERAS

NEIGHBORHOOD SAINTS ■ After four years of absence, the saints have returned to *El Museo del Barrio* on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The musem has opened a new, permanent exhibition of forty-five *santos*, hand-sized, hand-carved devotional figures once fixtures in Puerto Rican households. Among other personages, Saint Anthony, the Virgin of Montserrat, and the Three Kings make multiple appearances in diverse guises, conditions, and forms.

For some museum goers, the *santos* will seem like holdovers of another age—interesting, but only artistically or anthropologically. (Collectors have cornered the market since the 1950s.) Most will not even know the saints' stories, let alone pray for the intercession of this one or that. But the figures themselves have both charm and an intriguing power. They were once tightly woven into Puerto Rican daily life; devotees worked to maintain a relationship with a saint by doing him or her services like furnishing frequent coats of paint, flowers, and fresh water, and seeing that worn-out figures were properly buried.

Even the saints need a fresh coat of paint from time to time.

GOOD QUESTIONS ■ The lead-up to the January 7 Supreme Court hearing on physician-assisted suicide showed a less-than-skeptical media preparing the country for the inevitable: Physician-assisted suicide. So reasonable. So rational. So in keeping with medical progress.

It was refreshing then to have the Justices raising the critical questions the media forgot to ask. Listening to oral arguments, pro and con, for a case they will decide by the end of this term, the Justices asked (from excerpts in the *Washington Post*, January 9, 1997):

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: "In the *Cruzan* case, the court recognized a liberty interest and yet it upheld restrictive legislation....So couldn't one take the same approach here, there is a liberty interest, but because of the risks and dangers involved, considerable state regulation is permissible?"

Justice David H. Souter: "The argument runs [that]...the practice of assistance...is going to...gravitate down to those who are not terminally ill....And ultimately it's going to gravitate out of physician-assisted suicide into euthanasia....I'm not sure how I should weigh or value that risk....What empirical basis do I have for evaluating that argument?"

Justice Antonin Scalia: "I suppose that proclaiming a liberty interest is cost-free so long as you can proclaim them and then say, however they can be outweighed by various social policies adopted by the states. We can say there's a liberty interest in murdering people, however it's outweighed by the state's interest in preserving the lives of its citizens. I guess we could do that, couldn't we?"

Justice Anthony M. Kennedy: "Surely legislators have much more flexibility and a much greater capacity to absorb these kinds of arguments and make these decisions than we

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do. You're asking us in effect to declare unconstitutional the laws of fifty states."

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist: "The liberty interest [*Cruzan*] recognized was the right to refuse medical treatment....Declining medical treatment is something quite different from suicide....Why can't a society simply determine as a matter of public morality that it is wrong to kill yourself just as it is wrong to kill someone else?..."

RESEARCH NEWS ■ Headlines from three major newspapers on January 9, 1997:

Abortion Study Fuels Debate on Cancer Link (*Wall Street Journal*).

Big Study Finds No Link in Abortion and Cancer (*New York Times*).

Study Disputes Breast Cancer Abortion Link (*Washington Post*).

The subject: A Danish study of 1.5 million Danish women who had had abortions. The question: Does abortion lead to an increased risk for breast cancer?

The *Journal* story began on the front page and focused exclusively on how the findings would play in the U.S. abortion debate.

The *Times* report was full of good news—there was "no overall increased risk of breast cancer among those who had had induced abortions"—until the bottom of the story: "Among 2.3 percent of women who had abortions after the first trimester, however, the researchers found a gradually increasing risk of breast cancer as the the term of the aborted pregnancy advanced. Thus, for women whose pregnancies were terminated after eighteen weeks, the risk found was nearly twice that of women who had abortions from seven to ten weeks of a pregnancy."

The *Post*'s first paragraph read: "Women who get an abortion during the first eighteen weeks of pregnancy do not have an increased risk of getting breast cancer later in life...."

READING BALASURIYA ■ The following articles by Tissa Balasuriya, O.M.I., appeared in *Commonweal*:
"Communism in Asia," January 22, 1965;
"World Apartheid," December 24, 1965;
"Opinion on Vietnam War," September 30, 1966;
"Insurrection in Ceylon," June 11, 1971;
"The Post-Conciliar Church in Asia," June 29, 1973;
"Theological Reflections on Vietnam," September 26, 1975;
"Women in the Church," January 16, 1976.

OF SEVERAL MINDS

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

TWO CHURCHES

Fixed menu or à la carte?

Last fall I wrote a speech for a college leadership conference on what it was like to be a layperson in the Catholic church for most of its history in this country. Perhaps I should have been prepared for the astonishment expressed at this reflection on the part of many of the audience. But it had not occurred to me that so many mature Catholics today do not know or remember a church in which the role of the laity was so minimal—to be a passive receiver of spiritual goods and services, on the one hand, and to support the good works of clergy and religious, on the other.

In a 1979 essay for the collection *Why Catholic?* compiled by John J. Delaney for Doubleday, I wrote, "The question is usually posed to me a bit differently. Why, I am asked, am I *still* a Catholic?" More and more often, I continued, the question is posed by women who shared many of my own concerns. And I concluded my answer by writing, "I suppose if I were to abandon Catholicism because the juridical and legal church puts me in a secondary place, I would have left long ago. I am, after all, a layperson and whatever I suffer in the church as a woman, I suffered first as a layperson."

The attitude toward the laity in the past was that the work of the laity was not the work of the church. The work of the church in the world was provided by clergy and religious. If laypersons were needed and employed in Catholic institutions, it was as what I can only call second-class citizens. For example, shortly before I joined the faculty of a Catholic college, lay teachers were excluded from faculty meetings—it was thought that there was no need for them to be there. This was quite usual at Catholic colleges in general.

Laypersons were also discouraged from launching any action in the name of the church. When, for example, in the 1940s my husband and I sought to reopen a closed Catholic high school with a corps of dedicated Catholic teachers (and with a priest as head of religious instruction!), we had the support of the local pastor, but the archbishop of the diocese decreed that while *he* was archbishop no school run by laypersons would be allowed. Rather no Catholic school than one managed by the laity! (Remembering this, we can smile as we think how dependent on lay teachers are Catholic schools at all levels today.)

Despite the prevailing attitude toward the laity, many were caught up in the great struggle for social justice which became the hallmark of the church in the '40s, '50s, and early '60s ending in Vatican II and its results. The great social encyclicals had been working as a leaven.

Ever since Leo XIII and his labor encyclicals, Catholic thinkers had been struggling with the problems of economic justice. These pioneers concerned themselves in theory with the criticism of capitalism and *laissez-faire* economics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's Your Call

A MASTER OF DIVINITY DEGREE
at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley

- A place to explore intellectually
- A community of adult students excited about theology
- Hundreds of courses to choose from in an ecumenical setting
- Integration of study, spirituality and experience

CALL us at 1-800-824-0122 or 510-841-8804 or WRITE for information to:

Director of Admissions
Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley
1735 LeRoy Avenue • Berkeley, California 94709-1193
FAX: 510-841-8536 • EMAIL: Admissions@JSTB.edu

INSIDE THE VATICAN

The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church

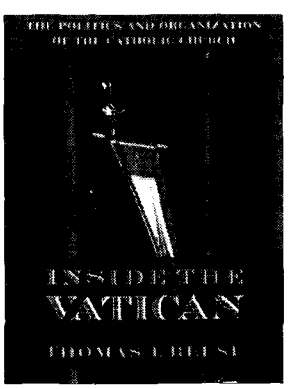
THOMAS J. REESE

"One need not be Catholic or even religious to appreciate this fascinating look into the Vatican, an institution with worldwide influence. Reese, a Jesuit priest and political scientist, provides detailed information, much of which is not available elsewhere, on the internal workings of the Vatican both as city-state and the headquarters of the Catholic church...With its wealth of information, historical background, and analysis, Reese's work should be an important addition."

—LIBRARY JOURNAL

$24.95 cloth

THOMAS J. REESE is a Jesuit scholar with a doctorate in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, and a senior fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University.



Harvard University Press
800 448 2242
www.hup.harvard.edu

In the United States this had had its practical effect in Catholic involvement in and support of the labor movement, and in the organization and professionalization of charity. It also included the beginning of an attack on racism.

And, willy nilly, Catholic lay persons launched actions in the name of the church, albeit without church sponsorship or *imprimatur*. *Commonweal* was one of the first journals founded and staffed by Catholic laymen. It already had a substantial circulation at the time other laypersons were still experiencing incidents like those recounted above. And *Commonweal*'s welcome by clergy in positions of authority was far from general. In fact, it was banned on many Catholic campuses. The students in the seminary near the college where I taught used to take delight in smuggling it in. (Its appearance in the hip pocket of an actor in one of the annual skits caused uproarious laughter when he turned his back on the audience.) The welcome of the influential *Catholic Worker*, both paper and movement founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, was equally ambivalent. Dorothy, regarded as a saint today, was often *persona non grata* on Catholic campuses. One could cite one example after the other of lay initiative and clerical resistance.

Nevertheless, there has been a lay revolution. As former *Commonweal* editor Daniel Callahan wrote as long ago as 1966 (*The New Church*, Scribner's):

> The revolution has been long in the making—both clergy and laity have contributed to bringing it about. From the clerical side, the innumerable exhortations of recent popes that the laity become more active in the service of the church, the work of important clerics on the theology of the laity, and the widespread desire of many bishops, pastors, and priests for lay assistance have been a major influence. From the lay side, the emergence of an educated class of laymen, the heeding of papal and episcopal words, and a general rebirth of Christian spirituality have all made a profound difference. Taken together, these

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

developments are nothing less than revolutionary.

And yet as Callahan wrote then, "for the most part the revolution remains one of attitude, expectation, and aspiration—not one of profound change in the church itself....Given the present status of the laity in the church, it is exceedingly difficult to see how, in fact, lay inspirations can be realized....As things stand now, lay aspiration is for the most part in direct conflict with possibility." And yet he entertained a hope, however faint, that Vatican II would find a means of giving the laity a hearing on the hierarchical matters which concern them without sacrificing the necessary authority of the hierarchy and clergy. But this did not happen.

What did happen was the rise of an emboldened laity growing more visible as initiators, activists, leaders, and lay ministers, and more vocal as teachers and theologians, while at the same time the magisterium became more rigid and less inclined to share authority, and paid laypersons little heed except where they were needed as workers in the parish vineyard. As a consequence we have the flourishing of the "cafeteria Catholic." The "cafeteria Catholic" picks and chooses among the teachings of the church. And he can make his disagreement felt. Ten years ago sociologist Andrew Greeley reported on the lay reaction to the stiffening of authority. There was no great defection of Catholics from the church but "the overwhelming majority of American Catholics reject some, but by no means all, of the church's sexual teachings." And American Catholics have registered their protest by a lowering of their financial contributions to the church (*see*, Greeley, "The Lay Reaction" in *The Church in Anguish*, Harper & Row, 1986). In *Commonweal*'s September 13, 1996 laity issue, another former *Commonweal* editor, Peter Steinfels, analyzed a current report on the Catholic laity entitled *Laity, American and Catholic*. He pointed out that for the post-Vatican II laity "a certain kind of tightly structured church with precisely articulated doctrines, clearly differentiated roles, detailed codes of conduct, and sharply delineated boundaries, is passing into history." More and more Catholics believe that they alone should determine what is right or wrong—especially in matters of sexual morality—using church teaching simply as a helpful guide. The danger is that the *laissez-faire* attitude toward sexual teaching may be extending to social teaching. Opposition to capital punishment, for example, and a concern for and an obligation to help the poor are for the majority no longer considered essential to being a good Catholic.

Herein lies our present danger: two churches—one tightly structured with precise doctrines, the other largely *laissez-faire*—still existing as one and neither wholly faithful to the founder. Who will reunite them? □

Francis X. Clooney

RELATIVISM IN PERSPECTIVE

Rereading Ratzinger

On January 4, 1997, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith announced that it had excommunicated the Sri Lankan theologian Tissa Balasuriya. Balasuriya, a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, had been involved for several years in controversy with the Sri Lankan bishops and the Vatican over his views on a range of issues, including Original Sin, the place of Mary in Christian piety, and the role of Christ in human salvation. He defended his views as appropriate and necessary adaptations in the context of the culture and religion of Sri Lanka—where Buddhism and Hinduism predominate and the Christian minority is tiny. This defense was dismissed by Vatican officials. In turn, the theologian refused to sign a profession of faith which included a promise of complete submission to church authority and an affirmation that the church does not have the power to ordain women. His offer to sign instead the profession of faith composed by Paul VI and his direct appeal to the current pope were also dismissed. He was excommunicated on January 2.

This is a sad and complex controversy. It involves serious theological differences over the truths of the Catholic faith and their communication in a pluralistic religious environment; a cultural clash between Vatican officials and a theologian in postcolonial Asia; and yet another chapter in the argument about dialogue and due process inside the Catholic church. Since the pertinent documents are not yet available, however, the full significance of the confrontation is not clear. But certainly one underlying issue is the concern of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the congregation, that relativism is ruining the church.

In a recent address delivered before the presidents of Latin American doctrinal commissions and before bishops from "mission territories," the cardinal spoke on "Relativism: The Central Problem for Faith Today" (*Origins*, October 31, 1996). In Ratzinger's view, too many Catholics are inclined to believe that people of all religions can contribute equally to human advancement; that truth can be known only through multiple limited expressions; that all religions reach the same transcendent goal, though by different paths; and that Christ is but one face of ultimate reality. Tainted by this tolerant attitude, the cardinal observed, Catholics are too ready to presuppose, when they enter upon interreligious dialogue, that other religions deserve equal respect and that Christian faith is not necessarily superior to the faith articulated in other traditions. This dangerous relativism, he believes, has replaced a Marxist-influenced liberation theology as the number-one threat to the faith today.

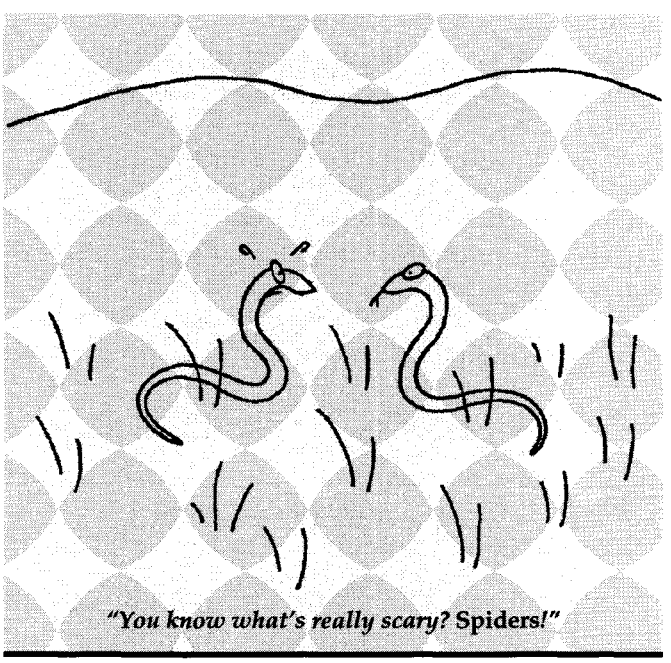
Ratzinger fills out his critique in two ways. First, he uncovers an alliance between Western theorizing about plu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ralism and "Asia's negative theology," particularly India's Hindu heritage, according to which "the divine can never enter unveiled into the world of appearances in which we live." This traditional characterization—"traditional" because for centuries Europeans have had the habit of finding in India whatever they happen to be seeking—portrays Indians and Hindus as denying the reality of the world and being ambiguous about religious truth and tolerant of all religious viewpoints. Contrary to the cardinal's characterization, a century of Indological scholarship shows that the Hindu traditions are often exceedingly precise and developed in their doctrines and truth claims, and that, for the most part, they are quite willing to speak positively about the world, our responsibilities, and divine involvement in human affairs. As the cardinal seems to recognize later in his speech when he briefly explores the Indian emphasis on right practice—more basically a question of ritual than of ethics—India is not a natural or obvious ally of relativism. Indeed, until they are studied closely and carefully, the Hindu traditions are best presumed to be nonaligned in Christian theological debates.

Second, the cardinal names in his talk two contemporary thinkers as indicative of the relativist mindset: the Presbyterian John Hick and the Roman Catholic Paul Knitter. Hick is a British theologian and philosopher of religion who has spent a long, distinguished, and provocative career exploring many Christian theological issues, particularly Christianity's place among the world religions. His *Interpretation of Religion* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1989) is a mature summation of his position on pluralism: He says that it is philosophically and theologically necessary to distinguish between reality and our perceptions of it and, accordingly, it is also necessary to expect an enduring plurality of religious viewpoints.

Knitter is a well-known Catholic theologian who has written extensively on religious pluralism and on the religious aspects of human liberation in the global context. Most recently the author of *Jesus and the Other Names* (Orbis, 1996), he is most famous for *No Other Name?* (Orbis, 1985). In the latter he argued on several grounds (including intellectual consistency, the sheer fact of religious diversity, and the values implied in a commitment to honest dialogue) that narrow views of religion—only Christ saves, all salvation is channeled through Christ—must give way before the realization that God, not any particular naming of God, is the core of religious faith. What matters most is that all religious persons share a commitment to the just transformation of the world.



"You know what's really scary? **Spiders!"**

The cardinal claims that Knitter and Hick rely too heavily on the Kantian distinction between appearances and an ever-elusive reality, and that they unfairly use modern scriptural exegesis to call into question biblical claims about Israel's God and Jesus. They end up, he says, denying the possibility that God can reveal himself definitively in history, and they wrongly conclude that Christianity is only one among many religions. He marvels that true Christian faith survives today, and not just in "surrogate forms" such as those he sees being offered by Hick and Knitter.

Cardinal Ratzinger's address draws attention to familiar but important questions we all need to keep thinking about. He is, of course, right in suggesting that even in dialogue—where true respect for other religions is non-negotiable, as John Paul II keeps reminding us—we must remain true to our fundamental Christian commitments; a bland, uninformed relativism, were anyone actively to propose it, would serve no good purpose, certainly not in dialogue. Although the cardinal's argument does not advance our understanding of how fidelity is to be balanced with an informed respect for other religions, it does indicate key philosophical, exegetical, and theological pitfalls to be avoided. We will never be free from the contingencies and limitations of human knowing, and must proceed with a certain humility; but it still can be true that God has communicated clearly and directly with the human race, and has become directly involved in our world, in particular ways.

The cardinal's address is based largely on one secondary source; it does not indicate how Hick and Knitter might defend themselves, nor does it invite their response. My guess is that they would in part agree with the cardinal, and in part disagree. Nor is it clear, at this writing, whether worries about relativism are at the heart of the argument between the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Balasuriya. But if relativism is *the* central problem facing Christians today, it would seem prudent that the cardinal sit down with theologians like Balasuriya, Hick, and Knitter, to explore in depth how we should understand and respond to the people of other faiths who live around us and among us and who are increasingly likely to be reading the books and essays we write about them. □

Francis X. Clooney, S.J., *is professor of theology at Boston College.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ISLAM & CHRISTIANITY FACE TO FACE

An old conflict & prospects for a new ending

John L. Esposito

The recent Taliban capture of Kabul and control of much of Afghanistan, Hamas's continued threats to disrupt the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, bombing attacks targeting American military in Saudi Arabia, attacks by Muslim extremists against Christians in Egypt and the Sudan, the brutal murder of Trappist monks in Algeria, communal riots from Nigeria to Indonesia between Muslims and Christians—these are the events associated with Islam that capture headlines and cause grave concern.

At the same time, Islamic political and social activism have become powerful institutionalized forces in mainstream society. Islamic candidates have held cabinet-level positions and been elected parliamentarians, mayors, and city officials in countries as diverse as Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Turkey, Pakistan, Yemen, Kuwait, Malaysia, and even Israel. Secular Turkey has its first Islamist prime minister, Malaysia's deputy prime minister was the founder of a major Malaysian Islamic movement, and Bosnia has a president often identified as an Islamist.

Islam has also proved a potent social force in civil society. Islamically inspired institutions—schools, hospitals, clinics, legal aid societies, social services, banks, publishing houses—have proliferated. Islamists have won elections in professional associations from faculty and student groups to organizations for physicians, lawyers, and engineers.

While there is much that could be written about the positive interaction and exchanges between Islam and Christianity, the realities of contemporary politics and the media have produced a different set of issues. Some speak of a clash of civilizations and a new Crusade, others warn of the dangers of demonizing this major world religion, and there is the tendency of some in the post-cold war period to identify Islam as the new global threat.

Ironically, all too often we seek understanding and answers as though we are inquiring about a "foreign" or alien faith. In fact, Islam is well on the way to becoming the second largest religion in the United States and Europe in the twenty-first century. Thus, we are not just talking about strangers who are Muslims but, in a very real sense, our neighbors as well.

John L. Esposito *is professor of religion and international affairs and director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. Editor-in-chief of* The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, *Esposito's other publications include* The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality? *and* Islam: The Straight Path *(all Oxford University Press).*

History of Conflict and Misunderstanding

Despite many common theological roots and beliefs, Muslim-Christian relations have often been overshadowed by conflict as the armies and missionaries of Islam and of Christendom have been locked in a struggle for power and for souls: from the fall of the Byzantine (eastern Roman) Empire before Muslim armies in the seventh century to the Crusades during the eleventh and twelfth centuries; the expulsion of the "Moors" from Spain and the Inquisition; the Ottoman threat to overrun Europe; European (Christian) colonial expansion and domination from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries; the political and cultural challenge of the superpowers in a period of "neocolonialism" during the latter half of the twentieth century; the creation of the state of Israel by Western "Christian" countries and consequent Palestinian exile; the competition of Christian and Muslim missionaries today, from Africa to Southeast Asia; and the contemporary reassertion of Islam in politics around the world.

Ironically, the very theological similarities of Christianity and Islam had put the two on an early collision course. Both religions had a universal message and mission. Both possessed a supercessionist theology; that is, each community believed that its covenant with God was the fulfillment of God's earlier revelation to a previous community that had gone astray. While Christians had little problem with their supercessionist views toward Judaism, a similar claim by Muslims to have the final revelation was unacceptable and, more than that, a threat to the uniqueness and divinely mandated role of Christianity to be the only means to salvation.

Christendom experienced the early conquests and expansion of Islam as a theological, political, and civilizational challenge to its religious and political hegemony. Muslim rule, and with it the message of Islam, quickly spread from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Byzantine and Persian Empires to Syria, Iraq, and Egypt, and swept across North Africa and into Europe where Muslims ruled Spain and the Mediterranean from Sicily to Anatolia.

Non-Muslims in the Islamic State

For non-Muslim populations in Byzantium and Persia, who were subjugated to foreign rulers, Islamic rule meant an exchange of rulers rather than a loss of independence. Many in Byzantium willingly exchanged Greco-Roman rule for new Arab masters—fellow Semites—with whom they had closer linguistic and cultural affinities. Christians and Jews were regarded as "People of the Book" (those who had possessed a scripture/revelation from God). In exchange for allegiance to the state and payment of a poll (head) tax, these "protected" (*dhimmi*) peoples could practice their faith and be governed by their religious leaders and law in matters of faith and private life (family laws).

Thus, Islam proved more tolerant than imperial Christianity, providing greater religious freedom for Jews and indigenous Christians; most local Christian churches had been persecuted as schismatics and heretics by a "foreign" Christian orthodoxy. As Francis E. Peters, writing about the early Muslim empires, has observed:

> The conquests destroyed little: what they did suppress were imperial rivalries and sectarian bloodletting among the newly subjected population. The Muslims tolerated Christianity but they disestablished it; henceforth Christian life and liturgy, its endowments, politics, and theology, would be a private not a public affair. By an exquisite irony, Islam reduced the status of Christians to that which the Christians had earlier thrust upon the Jews, with one difference. The reduction in Christian status was merely judicial; it was unaccompanied by either systematic persecution or blood lust, and generally, though not everywhere and at all times, unmarred by vexatious behavior.

The rapid spread and development of imperial Islam produced a rich Islamic civilization, which reflected religious and cultural synthesis and exchange. With significant assistance from Christian and Jewish subjects, Muslims collected the great books of science, medicine, and philosophy from the West and the East and translated them into Arabic from Greek, Latin, Persian, Coptic, Syriac, and Sanskrit. The age of translation was followed by a period of great creativity as a new generation of educated Muslim thinkers and scientists made their own contributions to learning: in philosophy, medicine, chemistry, astronomy, algebra, optics, art, and architecture. The cultural traffic pattern was again reversed when Europeans, emerging from the Dark Ages, turned to Muslim centers of learning to regain their lost heritage and to learn from Muslim advances in philosophy, mathematics, medicine, and science.

From the Crusades to European Colonialism

Few events have had a more shattering and long-lasting effect on Muslim-Christian relations than the Crusades. For many in the West, the specific facts regarding the Crusades are but a dim memory. Few remember that it was the pope who called for the Crusades, and that on balance the Crusaders lost. For Muslims, the memory of the Crusades lives on as the clearest example of militant Christianity, an early harbinger of the aggression and imperialism of the Christian West. If many in the West have regarded Islam as a religion of the sword, Muslims through the ages speak of the Christian West's crusader mentality and hegemonic ambitions.

For Muslim-Christian relations, it is less a case of what actually happened in the Crusades than how they are remembered. Each community looks back with memories of its commitment to defend its faith and with heroic stories of valor and chivalry against "the infidel." Both Muslims and Christians saw the other as militant, somewhat barbaric, and fanatic in religious zeal, determined to conquer, convert, or eradicate the other, and thus an enemy of God.

A second far-reaching and influential event affecting the relationship of Islam to the West is the experience of European colonialism. Its impact and continued legacy remain alive in Middle East politics and throughout the Muslim world today. No one who has traveled in and studied the Muslim world can be oblivious to the tendency of many Muslims to associate their past and current problems in large part with the legacy of European colonialism.

European colonialism abruptly reversed a pattern of self-rule that had existed from the time of the Prophet. The vast majority of the Muslim community had possessed a sense of history in which Islam had, over the centuries, remained triumphant, and Muslims lived under Muslim rule. As the balance of power and leadership shifted to Europe, much of the Muslim world found itself either directly ruled or dominated by the Christian West, threatened by "crown and cross." On the other hand, many Europeans believed that modernity was not only the result of conditions producing the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, but also due to the inherent superiority of Christianity as a religion and culture. The British spoke of the "white man's burden" and the French of their "mission to civilize" as they colonized much of Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia.

The external threat to Muslim identity and autonomy from European Christendom raised profound religious as well as political questions for many in the Muslim world: What had gone wrong? Why had Muslim fortunes been so thoroughly reversed? Was it Muslims who had failed Islam, or Islam that had failed Muslims? How were Muslims to respond?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The creation of Israel and the politics of the cold war were regarded as signs of a new colonialism in the post-World War II period, a hegemonic chess game between the United States and the Soviet Union that threatened the identity and integrity of the Muslim world.

Israel was considered a European/American colony in the midst of the Arab nation. For Arab leaders, Palestine provided a cause that they could exploit to buttress their power domestically and internationally. The struggle against Israel symbolized the battle against imperialism, provided a common cause and sense of unity, and distracted from the failures of many regimes. Both the secular and the religiously oriented—Arab nationalists and Islamic activists—found common ground in their focus on liberating Palestine, the great *jihad* ("struggle," holy war) against Western imperialism.

The Iranian revolution of 1978-79 focused attention on "Islamic fundamentalism" and with it the spread of political Islam in other parts of the Muslim world. However, this contemporary revival had its origins and roots in the late 1960s and early 1970s in such disparate areas as Egypt and Libya as well as Pakistan and Malaysia. The ongoing failures of many of these countries' economies, the growing disparities between rich and poor, corruption, and the general impact and disruption of modernity spawned disillusionment and a sense of failure within modern Muslim states. In addition, American ignorance of and hostility toward Islam and the Middle East, often seen by Muslims as a "Christian Crusader" mentality influenced by Orientalism and Zionism, were blamed for misguided U.S. political-military policies: support for an "un-Islamic," authoritarian Shah of Iran, massive military and economic funding of Israel, and the backing of an "unrepresentative" Christian-controlled government in Lebanon. These crises reinforced a prevailing sense of impotence and inferiority among many Muslims, the product of centuries of European colonial dominance that left a legacy of admiration (of the West's power, science, and technology) as well as deep resentment (of its dominance, penetration, and exploitation).

For Islamic political activists, Islam is a total or comprehensive way of life as revealed in the Qur'an, God's Word, mirrored in the example of the Prophet Muhammad and the first Muslim community-state, and embodied in the Shariah, Islamic law. Thus, for Islamists the renewal and revitalization of governments and societies require the restoration or reimplementation of Islamic law, which is the blueprint for an Islamically guided and socially just state and society. While Islamists reject the Westernization and secularization of society, modernization through science and technology is accepted. However, the pace, direction, and extent of change should, they believe, be subordinated to Islamic belief and

Master's in Theology and Pastoral Ministry

Earn a Master's Degree in Theology in Four Summer Sessions

"My theology degree from Saint Michael's was a life-giving experience."

–SHAWN ADAMS
1995 GRADUATE

The graduate program in Theology and Pastoral Ministry is one of the oldest summer-based programs in the United States. Saint Michael's is a small enough community to make a cohesive student body and large enough to afford the resources for a wide selection of internationally recognized scholars and teachers. The residential feature of the program adds much to the atmosphere of warmth and friendship for which our program is renowned.

SAINT MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
The Prevel School
Department of Graduate Theology & Pastoral Ministry
Winooski Park, Colchester, VT 05439
(802) 654-2579

1997 Summer Session
Faculty & Courses

Rev. Gerald A. Arbuckle, s.m.
Refounding the Church,
June 30 to July 4

Rev. John Coleman, S.J., Ph.D.
Discipleship and Citizenship,
July 21 to August 1

Rev. Wilfrid J. Harrington, O.P., S.T.D.
Biblical Spirituality, **July 7 to 18**
Studies in Luke-Acts,
July 21 to August 8

Sr. Maribeth Howell, O.P., Ph.D.
Psalms and Wisdom,
June 30 to July 18

Rev. Philip Keane, S.S.
Issues in Health Care Ethics,
July 21 to August 8

Rev. Dermot Lane
Hope Seeking Understanding,
June 30 to July 18

Lucien Richard, o.m.i.
Christology,
July 21 to August 8

Bruce Lescher, Ph.D.
American Catholic Spirituality: History and Trends
July 21 to August 8

Susan K. Roll, Ph.D.
Sacraments of Initiation,
June 30 to July 18

Robert J. Wicks, Ph.D.
Self-Awareness and Compassion,
June 30 to July 18

CENTER FOR MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS
John Roberto, Director
Certificate in Family Faith Development: **July 14-18**
Innovations in Faith Development: **July 21-25**

BIBLE STUDY TOUR OF ISRAEL AND JORDAN
Dr. Anthony Tambasco
May 25 to June 8

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

values, so that the penetration and excessive dependence on Western values can be avoided.

In the 1990s, Islamic revivalism has developed from small radical groups or organizations on the periphery of society to a significant part of mainstream Muslim society. This "quiet revolution" has produced a new class of modern, educated, but Islamically oriented elites and organizations that exist alongside their secular counterparts. They have become part and parcel of mainstream religion and society, found among the middle and lower classes, educated and uneducated, professionals and workers, young and old, men, women, and children. A new generation of Islamically oriented leaders may be found in Egypt, the Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Jordan, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Yemen, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

Islam & the West: Challenge or Threat?

According to some, Islam and the West are on a political, demographic, and religio-cultural collision course. Past images of a Christian West turning back threatening Muslim armies are conjured up and linked to current political as well as demographic realities. Immigrants and immigration have become an explosive political issue in Europe and America.

If the 1980s were dominated by fear of "other Irans" or of underground terrorist groups, the emergence of Islam's "quiet revolution" has increased fears of political Islam. Its global force is now seen not only in the Islamic Republics of Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan, but also in the emergence of Islamists as effective political and social actors in Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Yemen, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Governments in the Middle East, both Arab states and Israel, play on such fears, warning of the dangers of "fundamentalism," domestically and internationally. Often their appeals conveniently obscure their own domestic political, economic, and social problems and causes for opposition and instability. The "fundamentalist" threat, described monolithically and equated solely with radicalism and terrorism, becomes a convenient pretext for crushing political opposition, nonviolent as well as violent, and backing away from previous commitments to democratization or greater political participation. For example, Tunisia's Zeine Abedin Ben Ali used such an excuse to "decapitate" his Islamic opposition (the Renaissance party which had emerged as the leading opposition in elections), as well as to silence secular opposition and thus win the elections of 1993 with 99.91 percent of the vote. With the end of the cold war and the threat of communism, a similar mission with a new threat, "Islamic fundamentalism," has become a primary excuse for Israel and Egypt to attract foreign aid or excuse human rights records of abuses. Fear of fundamentalists coming to power has often influenced European and American attitudes toward Turkey, Bosnia, Chechniya, Central Asia and, more broadly, the promotion of democratization in the Muslim world.

At the same time the record of Islamic experiments in Iran, Sudan, Pakistan, and, most recently, Afghanistan has reinforced fears of the export of terrorism. Reports of the forced veiling and seclusion of women, militant attacks against Christians in Egypt and Sudan, and discrimination against the Bahai in Iran and the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan exacerbate concerns about the rights of women and minorities. While many modern Muslim states granted equality of citizenship to all regardless of religious faith, the contemporary resurgence has resurrected pressures to reimplement classical Islamic laws which inform traditional attitudes and values that have remained operative in the minds and outlooks of many traditionally minded Muslims. Legal change implemented or imposed from the top down by a minority elite has not in many cases significantly changed popular culture and values.

In recent years, there are those who speak of a clash of civilizations, a clash between Islam and "our" modern secular (or Judaeo-Christian) democratic values and culture. Those who contrast Islamic civilization or culture with "our" modern Western culture conveniently slip into an "us and them" mentality that obscures the diversity of both sides, and implies a "static, retrogressive them" and a "dynamic, progressive us." Several things should be kept in mind. The history of religions demonstrates that all three Abrahamic faiths (as indeed all religions) change; the issue is not change but degrees of change. All three traditions have within them divergent orientations: orthodox, conservative, reformist, fundamentalist, "secularist," etc. Judaism and Christianity, responding to pressing modern political, social, economic or cultural challenges/realities, experienced their reformations, but with diverse responses that continue to be reflected in their differing communities. For example, think of the vast diversity that exists beteen Orthodox and Reform Jews, Southern Baptist and Unitarian Christians on issues ranging from evolution to abortion.

Islam is experiencing, sometimes in similar and sometimes in dissimilar ways, the tensions and conflicts that accompany the interactions between tradition and change. The West, and Judaism and Christianity, experienced centuries-long struggles as a result of the political revolutions that accompanied the emergence of modern states and societies to the Reformation (which included warfare as well as theological disputation). Islam and Muslim communities have been severely limited by a lack of freedom and autonomy, first because of European colonialism and more recently, in many countries, by authoritarian governments. As with the Western experience, this political, social, and religio-cultural reformation or revolution is at times one of radical change whose experiments and progress can in the short term degenerate into violent revolution and radicalism, provoked by both political and religious authoritarianism and demagoguery.

Most Muslims are not Islamic political activists. In fact, such activists constitute only a minority, albeit a significant

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

minority. Moreover, we must distinguish between a violent minority, bent upon the overthrow of governments, and a majority that, given the opportunity, will work within the system to bring about change. Even more difficult, of course, is distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate uses of violence. When are revolutions just? When is violence or warfare defensive rather than offensive? When is it just or unjust?

Islam in the West

The remarkable growth of Islam in Europe and America, where it is now the second- or third-largest religion, has raised fears about whether Muslims can be loyal citizens and even whether they will bring "fundamentalist" violence to the West. The World Trade Center bombing as well as bombings in Paris and France help to feed such fears. France has insisted on integration, not multiculturalism. Muslims have experienced levels of discrimination in society and the media in Europe and America that would simply not be tolerated by Christians and Jews.

Islam, like Christianity and Judaism, is a religion that provides a framework of faith and meaning that has transformed lives and societies. At the same time, again like Judaism and Christianity, it has been used or abused to justify violence and oppression. We can speak equally about militant Judaism and Christianity as we can about militant Islam. Part of our problem of interpretation is that when a Jewish extremist murdered Muslims at prayer in the Hebron mosque or assassinated Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin, or when Christian extremists, calling themselves the army of God, blew up an abortion clinic, we reflexively distinguished between the mainstream faith of Jews and Christians and the twisted use of religion by fanatics. Making an equivalent distinction with regard to Islam does not regularly occur. Similarly, while some do not object to the mixing of religion and politics in Israel, Eastern Europe, or Latin America (liberation theology), they will do so in a blanket way when it comes to Islam.

As Jews faced the challenges of preserving a sense of identity, community, and faith within an American society dominated by Christian culture and values, Muslims today as a religious minority face a similar challenge within a Judaeo-Christian or secular America. Real understanding can begin when we, the majority, come to realize that, despite our differences, there is a common Judaeo-Christian-Islamic heritage shared by all the children of Abraham, and that Islam is not a "foreign" or Middle Eastern religion any more than Judaism and Christianity. The Muslim presence in America spans centuries, not decades, and with a population of at least from 4 to 6 million, Muslims are indeed "us." The failures of our educational system to make us aware of these facts and our media's presentation of present Islam and Muslims only through "headline events" have distorted or obscured these realities.

Conclusion

This is an exceptionally dynamic and fluid period in Muslim history. Diverse voices in the Muslim world are grappling with issues from scriptural criticism and exegesis, modernism, democracy, and pluralism to women's rights and family values. The voices for substantive change are a minority and themselves divided, much as was the case, for example, in Roman Catholicism in the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century regarding modernism, pluralism, biblical criticism, and dissent. The days of excommunication, silencing, or banishment, the index of forbidden books, the easy consignment of "others" to hell, the struggle between the religious establishment and the laity may be in large part gone, but are not all that far behind us. For Muslims, who struggle with similar problems in many societies where political participation and freedom of expression have been restricted, and authoritarianism, patriarchy, and violence all too common, the battle can be especially contentious.

The fundamental question or issue for contemporary Muslims, one which affects Muslim-Christian relations as well, is the direction of Islamic revival or reform. Will it simply be a process of restoration of classical law, or will it be one of reformation: a reformulation of Islamic law that distinguishes between the immutable and the mutable, be-

A Master's Degree in Christian Spirituality and/or a Certificate in Spiritual Direction in Just Three Summers?

NOW ENTERING ITS 23RD SUMMER, THE Christian Spirituality Program of Creighton University in Omaha is a pioneer in its field with more than 550 graduates.

A Master's Degree requires two, four-week terms for just three summers. A certificate, one, four-week term for three summers. **Courses may also be taken for credit or audit as a summer sabbatical.** Summer 1997 terms begin June 9 and July 7.

One-Half Tuition
All Christian Spirituality students receive the special tuition rate of $192 per credit hour — one-half of regular tuition.

For more information, write, phone, fax or E-Mail
Christian Spirituality Program,
Creighton University Summer Sessions 1997
Box J, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178
Phone: **(402) 280-2424** *Toll Free:* **1-800-637-4279**
Fax: **(402) 280-2423** *E-Mail:* **univcoll@creighton.edu**

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY
Summer Sessions

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tween that which is divine and that which is the product of human interpretation? For believers everywhere, this is an all-too-familiar question.

Contemporary Islam challenges us all to know and understand the richness and diversity of the Muslim experience. Followers of Christianity and Judaism are specifically challenged to recall or to become aware of the faith of Islam, to acknowledge their Muslim brothers and sisters as children of Abraham. Muslim governments are challenged to be more responsive to popular demands for political liberalization and greater popular participation, to tolerate rather than repress opposition movements (including Islamic organizations and parties), and to build viable, democratic institutions. At the same time, new Islamic governments and movements are challenged to demonstrate by word and action that they acknowledge the rights of others, that pluralism and human rights are not valued only when Muslims seek access to power but also when they are in power. Self-criticism and the denunciation of religious extremism, intolerance, and authoritarianism are the only means by which Islamist claims can be credible.

Western powers are challenged to stand by the democratic values they embody and to recognize authentic populist movements and the right of the people to determine the nature of their governments and leadership, whether they choose a secular or a more Islamically oriented path.

And finally, as Christians and Jews, or their secular counterparts, view the changing specter of Islam, they need to remember their own histories. Moreover, they must seek to understand before they judge, not to excuse, but to be sure that their judgments, which have implications both internationally and domestically, are fair and informed. □

France & Algeria

Judging from the forensic evidence, investigators have indicated that a December 3, 1996 subway bombing in Paris was likely perpetrated by the same Algerian terrorists responsible for similar attacks the year before. In 1995, the violence swirled around the *ex post facto* election of Algerian President Liamine Zeroual. Zeroual had been made president in 1994 by fiat of the military, which had seized power in 1992 to pre-empt the election of an Islamic government that was, ironically, antipathetic to democracy. This time, the violence came on the heels of a new constitution that banned Islamic parties and granted the president discretionary power. The Armed Islamic Group, militants in Algeria's raging civil war, has repeatedly demanded that France cut its political and economic ties with Zeroual's régime.

Despite these pretexts, however, it is clear that the indiscriminate killings served no positive political goals. The subway bombings, as well as the May 1996 executions of seven French monks who lived in the mountains of Algeria, did little more than play into the hands of belligerents in a purported "clash of civilizations."

Terrorists like the Armed Islamic Group cast a pall upon Islam and give ammunition to French xenophobes like Jean-Marie Le Pen and his National Front faithful. But do things really come down to Islam versus "the West," or to humanity against barbarity, here *and* there? The rhetoric of opposing cultures disguises a primitive lust for power and disparages civilization and culture. In what the French newspaper *Le Monde* has called "the Algerian night," this manipulation cries out.

The reaction to the monks' murders makes for an instructive example. While the French Islamic community expressed its outrage that such crimes would be committed in the name of Islam, Le Pen shamelessly exploited "this tragic incident." First he took a swipe at the French government for having imperiled the monks, then he turned on the monks themselves for having cared for injured fighters on both sides in the French-Algerian colonial war. "A different conception from ours of civic loyalism," he noted—as if the monks had thereby made themselves anathema (*Le Monde*, May 26-27, 1996).

Like today's Chinese and Iraqi tyrants, Le Pen & Co. and the Algerian terrorists have all stigmatized "globalization." But indifferent to contradiction, they preach the same hate and practice the same stupid acts of violence the whole world over. As the philosopher Paul Feyerabend reflected toward the end of his life, there is no such thing as a "culturally authentic" murder. Against his own earlier relativism, he argued that culture is not an envelope, but the mode of our openness to life and its mysteries.

A friend has told me that now, on the Paris subway, there is only silence and suspicion. Will the barbarians win? In the aftermath of the latest bombing, Henri Tincq, *Le Monde*'s religion correspondent, quoted the hopeful words of the rector of a suburban Paris mosque: "It is in distress and misfortune that we recognize one another as brothers" (December 6, 1996).

BERNARD G. PRUSAK

Bernard G. Prusak *is Commonweal's 1996–97 editorial intern.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PILLARS OF ISLAMIC FAITH

What we should know & why

David B. Burrell

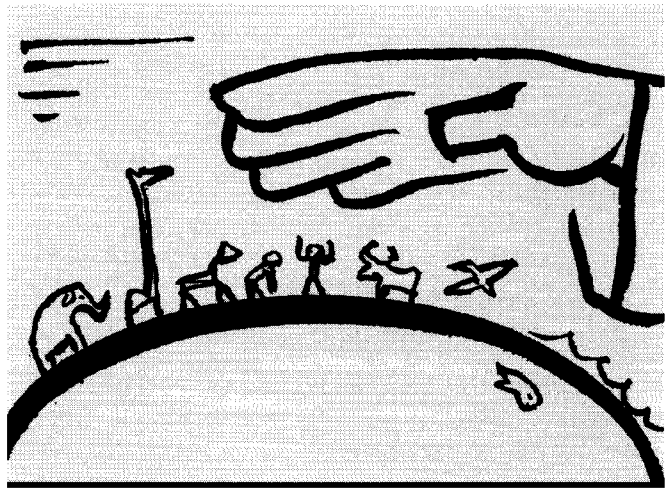
The watershed for Catholics with regard to other religions is the Vatican II document, *Nostra aetate*. Celebrated for its breakthrough in acknowledging the status of Jews as God's people—"the gifts and call of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29)—this slim statement reaches out to all "other religions," notably to Islam for its steadfast preaching of one transcendent God who is the free creator of all that is. It was that very preaching, of course, that set Islam on a collision course with Christianity over the ages, since both movements could be described as inviting all nations to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yet the Qur'an "came down" to Muhammad (A.D. 570-632) six centuries after Jesus, so that a large portion of the developed world which it soon overran had been evangelized for centuries. The result was relatively isolated pockets of Christians living within dominant Islamic polities, and a massive stand-off between Western Christianity and Islam. They were, after all, competing for the same "souls." Many of the military engagements, celebrated in the church calendar or by verse in our heritage—Tours, Lepanto, and, of course, the Crusades—feature Islamic armies as the enemy.

Little has changed in that regard, as the current Western readiness to foist blame for nearly everything on "Muslim fundamentalists" can testify. Yet, as we shall see, the faith which Christians and Muslims share with Jews regarding the free creation of the universe by one God will be borne in on us more and more as we attempt to negotiate our way in a society ever in danger of losing any access to the transcendent source of all. What I have learned from living among Muslims and sharing in their life of faith is a profound respect for the palpable presence of God in human history, and a keen sense that each of us has an in-built destiny: To return all that we have received to the One from whom we have received it. And we have and do receive "nothing short of everything" from that One.

It is that sense of faith, which I first experienced in the Holy Land, then in Bangladesh and in Egypt, that has fueled my intellectual interest in Islam. And it has meant that I always take away more than I bring to any interfaith encounter with Muslims. This sounds so utterly at variance with the stereotype associated with "Muslim fundamentalist" that it should make us sit up and take notice: Anyone who has experienced the Muslim world comes away with a keen sense of its hospitality, and a desire to discover how it is rooted in Islam's particular faith in God. And certainly nothing is more opposed to terrorism than hospitality. Historical prejudices, however, die all too slowly.

Yet a historic collective enemy will invariably fascinate its adversary, particularly the latter's cultural and intellectual elites. So it will not be surprising to hear that many Western medieval thinkers, notably Thomas Aquinas, reached out to understand Islamic thinkers, especially to learn from their philosophical reflections. That outreach also reflects the fact that the Islamic cultural renaissance in tenth-century Baghdad had anticipated the touted medieval Renaissance in the West by a full two centuries. While Europe was passing through the Dark Ages, Islamic culture in what we call the Middle East was at its peak. Medieval thinkers in the West learned their astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and philosophy from the East, and its practitioners were Muslims. What was it about this conquering group of people from the Arabian peninsula that allowed them so quickly to assimilate Hellenic culture with its arts and sciences? And to communicate this to the West in such a way as to stimulate the Renaissance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries?

The revelation granted to Muhammad in the desert beginning about A.D. 610—the Qur'an (until recently transliterated as "Koran")—is taken by Muslims to be the Word of God made Arabic, just as orthodox Christians take Jesus to be the Word of God made flesh. God's Word is eternally with



David B. Burrell, C.S.C., *is Theodore M. Hesburgh Professor in Arts and Letters at the University of Notre Dame.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

God, for God could not be mute, but it was spoken in time to God's final prophet, Muhammad, over a period of years and in response to diverse situations that Muhammad faced. Yet the Qur'an remains God's Word, not Muhammad's, so that Christians should liken the Qur'an to Jesus rather than to the Bible. This point is cardinal yet confusing. For while Muslims grant a privileged place to Jews and to Christians as "peoples of the book"—thus inviting us to focus on the Bible and Qur'an—yet the relevant points of comparison are the Qur'an and Jesus. So Sufi Muslims, employing selected verses of the Qur'an as mantras for a meditation called *dhikr* (or recollection), will respond to that Word in their minds and hearts much as Christians respond to Communion in the context of Eucharist. The prevailing emotion is one of thanksgiving: That believers have been given God's Word to guide their actions and to enliven their hearts—the very Word through which the universe is created—"God said 'be' and it was"—and by which all human beings will be raised up on the Last Day.

These core beliefs profoundly shape Muslim society. They are put into practice via the famous "five pillars" of Islam: (1) confessing that God is One and Muhammad is God's prophet (the *shahada*); (2) communal ritual prayer, five times daily; (3) fasting during the lunar month of Ramadan, which ends with (4) an annual obligatory almsgiving; and (5) for those able to do so, making the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. The first and last of these are eminently personal actions, yet as the first profession of faith initiates one into the *umma* (the community), the other gives eloquent expression to that inclusive community itself. The three other "pillars" underscore the communal character of Islam. They consist of actions undertaken in solidarity with other believers or designed to alleviate the lot of the community's less fortunate members. The *umma* figures prominently in every aspect of Islamic life and practice. Muslims characterize Islam as an entire way of life rather than merely a religion. Contemporary Christians might want to object, feeling that Christianity is also a way of life. But hearing Muslims testify to their communal life of faith can make us acutely aware of how much the modern pattern of "privatizing" even religion has affected Western Christianity.

In Islam, individual rights are decidedly subordinated to the well-being of the community, with consequent effect on the various roles the community assigns to its members. It is here that the image of Islam can chafe Western sensibilities, especially in those Western societies that combine a so-called rights doctrine with a capitalist consumer culture. Yet just as personal affluence usually buys a relative dispensation from communal obligations—a fact even Islamic society has not avoided—we can readily imagine why Islam is so attractive to those members of a society who taste little of its affluence and privilege. In those sectors of our own society where the spirit of capitalism is most starkly displayed in the lucrative but destructive commerce of drug dealing, the communal bonds of Islam and its inherent discipline offer not only welcome protection but a protest against a dominant ideology that has marginalized entire sectors of society in the name of individual rights and economic success. In its communal life, Islam affords a genuine alternative to a liberal society's libertarian drift, and to the illusory freedom it touts, a freedom utterly beholden to powerful interest groups. If the phrase "common good" has ceased to function in our standard political vocabulary, it needs to become embodied in integral communities. In the United States, Islam has emerged as a viable one in our midst. Islam is the fastest growing faith worldwide, and in recent years has made striking advances in North America, particularly in the United States among African-Americans.

It is important that Christians study Islam to understand how it articulates itself from within, in its styles of theological reflection. Muslims are more at home with the descriptor "theology" than are Jews, yet they share something of a Jewish hesitation concerning academic theology. The Qur'an offers people a "straight path," how to return all they have received to the One from whom they have received everything. This path is elaborated in Qur'an commentaries of a quasi-legal sort (*fiqh*). Islam tends to be tolerant of a relatively wide range of beliefs, insisting primarily on compliance with the five pillars, however latitudinarian their practice may be. In short, *orthopraxy* is more important than *orthodoxy*. (Indeed, as the Salmon Rushdie affair shows, egregious disrespect for the Prophet may be treated more harshly than outright statements of heterodoxy.) Here the axial differences between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, the two major branches of Islam, offer a prime example. Although their very names indicate striking dissimilarities—Sunni means "consensus" while Shi'a means "a group apart"—both have a mutual stake in showing the world that "we are all Muslims."

The best example of a theologian we can find in Islam is al-Ghazali (A.D. 1058-1111). His *summa* of theology—*Ihya 'Ulum ad-Din*—uses the philosophy his predecessors had assimilated from the heritage of the Greeks to elaborate a rich understanding of Islamic faith and practice. The theological centerpiece of that work, "The Book of Faith in Divine Unity and Trust in Divine Providence [*Kitab at-Tawhid wa Tawakkul*]," shows how crucial is the *shahada* to Muslim faith, for confessing that God is One (and Muhammad his prophet) implies that all-that-is comes forth freely from God, and that all power in the universe is God's power, however much we may be impressed with our own. But the relation of the universe to the One on whom it depends so utterly and so intimately is quite beyond our capacity to understand, short of a "mystical unveiling." So our understanding of it will better be measured by our trust in God's providential care than in the brilliance of theological constructs. It will be displayed and tested by the manner of our actual response, our orthopraxy, though we can certainly use a subtle human understanding, by way of theological reflection, to temper and to direct that response.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yet if right living is a better test of understanding in matters divine than correct theological formulations, there is no less room for sophistication in "practical reason" than in "speculative reason." Muslim theology is more focused on knowing *how* than attempting to know *why*, thereby respecting the ineffable transcendence of the one God. Sufi spirituality within Islam offers a way of understanding God's oneness that transcends the conceptual, concentrating on *tasting* the power and light of God's word. It utilizes a form of meditation called *dhikr* (or recollection), concentrating at the same time on serving the needs of the disadvantaged members of the community. Despite this emphasis, Sufis make a point of not differing in their appearance from other Muslims; their focus is the heart and its struggle (*jihad*) to be utterly free to respond to the call to return everything to the One from whom everything derives.

Freedom and its articulation have long preoccupied Islamic thought. A school of thinkers in the first three centuries of Islam, anxious to absolve God from implication in evil actions, proposed that God was creator of everything *except* human actions, that human beings create their own actions. It soon became clear, however, that this human autonomy was too immense an arena to exempt from the divine creating power, so an alternative position came to prevail. Named for its proponent al-Ash'ari (d. A.D. 935), it insisted that God creates everything, including human actions of all sorts, although it is we who *perform* them. Where human actions go askew, as in sinning, these actions cannot be attributed to God but to us. An overly subtle position, perhaps, yet one that makes ethical sense: We characteristically make it easier for ourselves to engage in wrongdoing by calling whatever we are doing by another name, that is, pretending that we are not doing what we are in fact doing. (So no one sets out to commit adultery, but rather to relieve one's loneliness.) On the Ash'arite account, the action we are in fact performing is what God creates it to be; so it is illusory to give it another name in order to pretend we are doing something else. A neat reminder that there are interpersonal norms governing ethical action. So human freedom is normative in character: We are most free when we are "doing the truth," and the clearest guide to acting truthfully will be the Qur'an and its accumulated commentary tradition.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that Islamic societies will resist a Western cultural imperialism based on "individual rights," nor that many in the West will exhibit a newfound sympathy with Islam in that regard. We have noted the special appeal of Islam to those marginalized in our society; it may find a similar response among those who are quite favored by this society but have come to find it empty and soulless. The manifest point of appeal is the *umma* (or community), of course, but the very meaning of "Islam" can find resonance as well. Lexically translated as "submission," the multivalent word "Islam" is best rendered by a complex phrase: returning everything to the One from whom everything comes. Anyone who partakes of Muslim society and its hospitality cannot but be impressed by their palpable sense of the presence of God: God the Provider, to whom we are enjoined to give thanks by our actions on behalf of others. We are never to forget that our life comes forth each moment from the hand of God, and our destiny as well. This latter can easily spawn a form of "fatalism," where the ubiquitous phrase "*in sh'Allah*" ("God willing") becomes an excuse for taking no initiative whatsoever. Yet we in the West are also beginning to acknowledge the corrosive effects which our equally ubiquitous "autonomy" can have on a social order.

So each religious culture, it seems, will invariably distort the revelation which inspires it, presenting a sinister collective face to the world, and one which can prove lethal to other religious groups. Yet to recognize our own shadow side is also to acknowledge how the other can help us to offset it. The point where Christians find Islam an attractive alternative to Western liberal society might offer a path for us to discover afresh our role as distinctive communities within that society. Correlatively, Islamic communities living in the midst of a society which often seems antithetical to their values will need to find fresh ways to enculturate their young as well as witness to the society that surrounds them. A Christianity that no longer enjoys hegemony in the West, that is in search of new ways to witness to the community it claims to be, may take heart from an Islam transplanting itself in a society where it is clearly an outsider. The challenge of the new century to all religious groups is not only to learn to live together, as we so cavalierly put it, but to learn from each other how to do so in the face of a corrosive ethos that bears little respect for human life and destiny while ostensibly celebrating the individual. That may be one of the critical insights we can take home from Islam.

We will do so if we set ourselves to learn from Muslims how to live our lives as gifts from the free Creator of all, and so regard our freedom as a challenge to return to that Creator all that we have received—which is "nothing short of everything." As more people find Muslims moving in as neighbors, this task will become easier. Meeting them will also spur us to identify the inevitable bias in reporting things Muslim, and urge us to work against prejudice toward this group as we have been schooled to fight anti-Semitism. Indeed, Arabs will remind us that they too are Semites, as American Jews will remark that the prejudice against them seems to have been readily transferred to Arabs in our time and, by extension, to all Muslims. This essay has tried to explain why such biases persist, on both sides of the Muslim-Christian divide, and how much is at stake in dispersing them. The fringe benefit, as many have discovered, will be to meet people well-schooled in receiving others with a generosity intended to match Allah's to them, to open to them a "straight path" to God in the Qur'an. Encounters like that can only press us to understand the Gospels afresh; "mutual illumination" seems the most accurate watchword for interreligious dialogue. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A TALE OF TWO PRELATES

An ecumenist & a schismatic

Desmond O'Grady

That day in the cathedral in Yaounde, Cameroon, one of the two choirs accompanying a solemn Mass sang Gregorian chant; the other, Cameroon songs. A procession followed; when then-Archbishop Leon Etienne Duval of Algiers appeared, someone in the crowd called out, "Long live Muhammad Duval!" and others took up the cry, to general applause.

Recalling the episode in an interview after he had been named cardinal in 1982, Duval said he relished the nickname Muhammad, even though it originally had been bestowed on him by the French residents of Algeria hostile to his policy toward the Muslims. For Duval its adoption by Muslims indicated that the church was not a ghetto, whereas to *pieds-noirs* of his own diocese—the longtime French residents of Algiers—use of the nickname expressed their belief that Duval was a traitor to France.

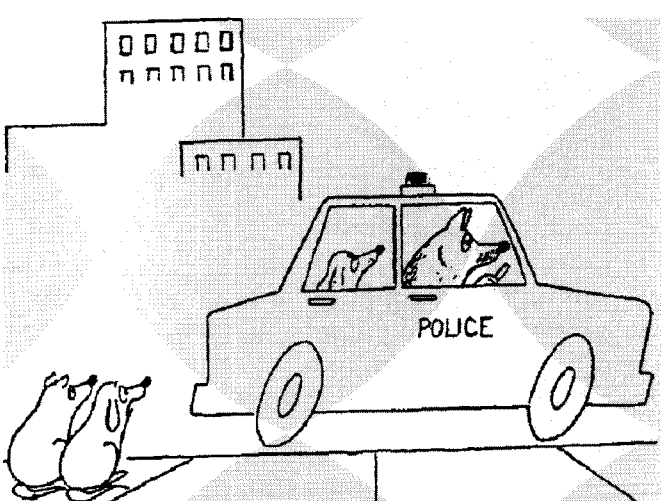
The life and career of Cardinal Duval, who died in Algiers in May 1996 at age ninety-two, offer a striking and illuminating contrast with a better-known figure, the archconservative Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, his contemporary at the French seminary in Rome in the 1920s. Both were posted to Africa after serving in their home dioceses in France; both reached high office in the church. Both took part in Vatican II, but they responded to the council in diametrically opposed ways.

A key to the differences between them seems to have been their attitude to the *Action Française* movement, launched in the last years of the nineteenth century and the focus of much controversy in the first half of the twentieth. *Action Française* was initially a promonarchist movement nostalgic for the prerevolutionary alliance between throne and altar. Gradually the monarchist ideal was displaced—any strong, authoritarian rule would do—but restoration of the traditional church-state alliance remained the goal. At a time when many French Catholics found their government to be programmatically anti-Catholic, the movement had strong appeal, even to some in the hierarchy.

Lefebvre was a sympathizer, and typical of those who wanted to impose order in society and orthodoxy in religion by a renewed church-state alliance. Duval opposed *Action Française* because he did not want to tie the faith to a socio-political system. But Duval did not favor a church confined to the sacristy, a sort of private religion; rather, he favored a vital civic role for the church. Ultimately, their differing conceptions of the proper relationship between faith and culture may have been more important than their theologies, although the two aspects obviously interacted.

When the two came to the French seminary in Rome in the early 1920s, the rector was a prominent supporter of *Action Française*, which also had influential supporters within the Vatican, who saw the movement as an antidote to "the poison of liberalism." But when Pius XI received the students of the French seminary, he reminded them that they were "Romans," that they should not be divided between monarchists and republicans but must devote themselves to the universal church. In December 1926, Pius prohibited Catholics from professions of allegiance to a movement that "puts religion at the service of politics." *Action Française* publications were put on the Index and the rector of the seminary resigned. But the antidemocratic and authoritarian spirit of the movement remained a factor in French history and, in contrasting ways, in the lives of both Lefebvre and Duval.

After ordination both men served in their dioceses in France. Duval was involved in pastoral work and teaching before



"Can you explain it? They come from good homes, they grow up together, and one becomes a good dog and one becomes a bad dog."

Desmond O'Grady, *longtime Rome and Vatican correspondent for English-language publications around the world, is the author of eight books. The most recent*—The Turned Card: Christianity before and after the Wall—*will be published by Loyola University Press (Chicago) in April. It has been translated into six languages.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

becoming vicar general in Annecy; in World War II he showed himself sympathetic to the French Resistance and wary of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime. Lefebvre did pastoral work in his diocese of Lille for a year, after which he joined a missionary order and was sent to West Africa, where eventually he became rector of a seminary in Gabon. In 1947, Duval became bishop of Constantine in Algeria, then a French colony thought of by his countrymen as "France-across-the-sea." Catholics were but 10 percent of Algeria's population. Lefebvre was named vicar apostolic of Dakar, Senegal, and, in 1948, apostolic delegate for all French-speaking Africa. In 1955 he became the first archbishop of Dakar. In these years Lefebvre, a good organizer, built many schools and churches and encouraged the emergence of a native clergy; he provided well for his priests and seemed destined for a brilliant ecclesiastical career.

Algeria had been a colony since its conquest by France in 1830; the *pieds-noirs* and their allies in France wanted no change. Duval's See city was the cradle of the Algerian nationalist movement, with its motto: "Arabic is our language, Algeria our country, Islam our religion." As tensions rose, Duval's response was reminiscent of his stance toward *Action Française*. To fulfill its true mission, he felt, the church in Algeria had to break its identification with French nationalism and culture. As a bishop he considered himself heir to an older tradition, that of Augustine and Cyprian when North Africa was one of the most vital centers of the church. Like them, he felt a responsibility toward all the people of the region and advocated social justice. Some Catholics, including major landowners, objected to his involvement in what they felt were purely economic issues. But he received support from the papal nuncio to France, Angelo Roncalli, the future John XXIII.

In February 1954, nine months before the Algerian independence movement became a revolution, Duval was appointed archbishop of Algiers. The location of his cathedral, part of it built on the site of a former mosque at the very edge of the casbah, symbolized the situation exactly. Zealots of the *Algérie Française* movement, including many of his clergy, could not understand why he advocated peace and social justice when rebels were strangling French residents or exploding bombs in restaurants. They said he was defending Moscow-manipulated terrorists and Muslims who hated the Christian West. Though in fact he denounced Islamic terrorists, he was the first European to deplore the use of torture by those in the French army who detested the thought of losing again as they had in Vietnam; some of the paratroopers in Algeria had arrived there directly from the catastrophic defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

The Algerian struggle became the centerpiece of French politics in the 1950s. After Charles de Gaulle took power in 1958, hawkish generals based in the colony made an unsuccessful attempt at a *coup d'état*. Duval, who saw the aim of the revolt as the eventual transformation of France itself into an authoritarian, pseudo-Catholic state, immediately condemned it and was publicly supported by John XXIII. The failure of the coup made Algerian independence inevitable.

Lefebvre was, predictably, on the other side. He had opposed decolonialization in Senegal, fearing it would mean the replacement of Christianity by Islam and/or communism. He took the same stance toward the independence movement in Algeria, but his viewpoint clashed with Vatican policy, and in 1962 he resigned as archbishop of Dakar. He was assigned to the small diocese of Tulle in France, where he publicly supported a sort of replay of *Action Française* called *Cité Catholique*, even after the French episcopacy had condemned it.

Both men carried their histories with them when the Second Vatican Council brought them to Rome in 1962. By this point in his life Duval looked ascetic: narrow-faced, lean, lanky, bald, and bespectacled. Lefebvre was short, compact, fair-complexioned, cordial if somewhat paternalistic.

Lefebvre had served on the council's Central Preparatory Commission, presided over by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani. Like others on the commission, he was dismayed when the Council Fathers more or less junked its proposals and replaced them with others. After the council his reservations about its decisions turned into sweeping criticisms and then

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY
Graduate Programs in Theology

MASTER OF ARTS

•Theology
•Theology specializing in Religious Education
•Historical Theology

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

•Historical Theology

For further information please contact:
Dr. Richard Valantasis
Director of Graduate Studies
Department of Theological Studies
3634 Lindell Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63108-3395
(314)977-2881

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into condemnation. For him the move toward collegiality in the church was a start toward collectivism, ecumenism a synonym for indifferentism, liturgical reform an acceptance of Luther's principles, any change a threat to Catholic tradition. Instead of converting the world, the church had been converted by the world, and this had to be the work of Satan. Becoming yet more vehement, he called the new liturgy a "bastard rite," and condemned the council as the AIDS of the church. Finally, in 1988, by consecrating his own bishops, he broke with Rome and set up altar against altar. In the political sphere he was equally radical, proposing in 1975 the murderous regime of Argentina's General Vidal as an example of the rule of God in civil society: "Here is the reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

At one point Lefebvre's onetime confrère Duval tried to bring him back from the brink. In a confidential letter written in August 1976, Duval had asked Lefebvre to submit to "the successor of Peter." By doing so, Duval said, Lefebvre "would reassure those Catholics who suffer from the division of the disciples of Christ, would enlighten those who hesitate to accept the Second Vatican Council and those who abuse the council by refusing the values of tradition and by generating disorder in the liturgy, discipline, and spiritual life." But Lefebvre would not heed calls for moderation; he had become convinced that salvation lay only outside the church grouped around the pope. He once charged that John Paul II had put himself outside the true church by visiting the synagogue in Rome and holding an interreligious meeting at Assisi.

After years of dealing with Lefebvre in gingerly fashion, Rome finally excommunicated him in 1988 for ordaining bishops without papal authority. Though some of his followers returned to Roman obedience, others persisted in schism, and Lefebvre himself died unreconciled in 1991.

As his letter to Lefebvre showed, Duval was not uncritical of certain consequences of Vatican II, and he harbored reservations about the Roman curia. But he was propapal because, in his words, "without the pope, third-world Christianity would fall under the influence of the churches of the rich countries, which could be fatal for the world

Remembering the martyrs

In March 1996, seven Trappist monks, including their prior, Dom Christian de Chergé, were abducted by Islamic sectarians from Our Lady of Atlas Monastery in Tibherine, Algeria. Brother Anthony, a member of the Trappist Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard, New York, passed on to me updatings of the situation from his order's office in Rome, along with background information about the Tibherine community's decision to remain in Algiers after their previous abduction in 1993, and after recent news had come to them of the assassination of other religious in the diocese of Algeria.

This decision was taken (in the words of Dom Armand Veilleux, the Trappists' procurator general):

> ...after prayer and dialogue; a decision that was lucid, courageous, serene, and unanimous. Not one of them "desired" martyrdom. [Dom] Christian...said that such a desire would be a sin, since it would be to desire that a "terrorist brother" should sin against the divine commandment "thou shalt not kill." His daily prayer during these past months had been, "Lord, disarm me, and disarm them."

Dom Armand explained that Dom Christian, fluent in Arabic and well-versed in the Qur'an, had made his monastery a place of Islamic and Christian encounter, "simply because everyone felt that they were received there as brothers and sisters and that their difference was respected."

Then on May 23 the French Foreign Ministry announced that a document, signed by the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, claimed that the monks had been killed. A week later the remains were found and were buried in Tibherine, at the request of the monks' families.

To honor their assassinated brothers, Trappist abbeys throughout the world held memorial services on Sunday, June 2. Brother Anthony, speaking on behalf of his abbot, Father John Eudes Bamberger, asked me if I would play a role in the Piffard memorial by reciting the Our Father in Arabic after Mass.

Naturally I was honored by the request, yet I arrived at the abbey that Sunday with one unresolved question: How was I to *say* the Our Father? My experience speaking Arabic was Islamic, not Christian. I had never heard the Our Father in Arabic in a Christian liturgical setting. Arabic, to me, was a language in which one vocalized and chanted the verses of the Qur'an. As a Christian, how was I to vocalize the Our Father when I had heard Arabic only in a Muslim context?

Then, as I sat just before Mass in the abbey's beautiful cave-like chapel pondering this question, Father John Eudes came up to me and put into my hands a document [*see*, page 31 for full text] which made the question unnecessary. That document was the remarkable "Testament" of Dom Christian, a statement in verse written after the 1993 abduction and left to be opened in the event of his suffering the kind of death which eventually did come to him.

The "Testament" had an effect I would call "uncanny," except that the word implies a spookiness

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Catholic community." On the whole, he welcomed conciliar innovations and acted on them, perhaps most notably the decree on ecumenism. After Algeria gained independence, he returned his cathedral to the Muslims and it became a mosque again. When he was made a cardinal in 1982 he took Algerian citizenship. Duval served for fifteen years as president of the North African Bishops' Conference. He was an interlocutor with the Islamic world (Iran invited him to visit the hostages held in the United States Embassy in Teheran at Christmas 1979) and a spokesman for the church of the third world.

But though Duval, in contrast with Lefebvre, made all the "right" choices, his last years, even after he resigned in 1988, were difficult. If Lefebvre's life indicates that for some Catholics the church's past has not been reconciled with its present, Duval's shows that a conciliar-reinforced willingness to read the signs of the times is no guarantee against disappointment.

After independence the number of Catholics in Algiers dropped drastically. Catholic schools, which had educated many non-Catholics, were nationalized. The secular, socialist, modernizing impulses that inspired the independence struggle have been followed by a fundamentalist upsurge. In 1992 the Islamic Salvation Front's success in the first round of national elections was thwarted by a military coup. A simmering civil war continues, causing deaths that some estimate at hundreds weekly. After his retirement in 1988 Duval continued to live in the Algeria he had made his own, but found himself facing an alliance of religion and society, though under Islamic auspices, that he abhorred.

A final irony: One of Duval's achievements during the independence struggle had been the revival of a Trappist monastery, Our Lady of Atlas (the Mountains), by French monks whose only external work was to give medical assistance to their neighbors. A group of Muslims attended it regularly for prayer and dialogue. But in May 1996 all of its seven monks, who had been kidnapped by fundamentalists, were killed. Duval reportedly said that news of the killings was a crucifixion for him. He died immediately. His funeral took place with that of the monks. □

which does not describe the sorrowful yet at the same time profoundly peaceful spirit of concentration that came over me. As I rose after Mass to walk, for the first time in my life, into the abbey's cloistered area, I felt as if I were accompanied by Dom Christian, especially when I stood facing the cross, imagining myself striving, as he must have done, to find a way, despite the threat of violent death, to embody the phrase, "as we forgive those who trespass against us...."

Thus inspired, I found no contradiction in vocalizing the preeminently Christian prayer as if it came from the pages of the Qur'an itself—chanting it as I felt certain Dom Christian had chanted it in his many meetings with Muslim guests at Tibherine. Such chanting in Arabic—as I explained briefly to the assembly before I began—has an elevating effect on the spirit. Intonations that at first seem harsh and perhaps even threatening acquire, with time, prayer, and study, a purity that stretches the heart. Uplifted as I felt by Dom Christian's spirit and by the very sound of the Qur'an, I looked at the cross near the altar. I was not simply standing there with Dom Christian, I was suspended there. And we had a companion, the one addressed in the last words of the prior's "Testment":

> And you, too, my last-minute friend, you who know not what you do.
>
> Yes, for you, too, I wish this thank you, and this *adieu* which is of your planning.
>
> May we be granted to meet each other again, happy thieves, in paradise, should it please God, the Father of both of us. Amen! *In sh' Allah*!

Brother Anthony, in his thank-you note to me afterwards, mentioned that the chanting had helped to soften his outlook toward Muslims. "Perhaps that is one of the fruits of this bloodletting," he wrote.

If there were such a fruit, it came, by way of Dom Christian, from the cross itself. Dom Armand reported on June 7 of the ripening of that fruit in Algeria:

> The whole Algerian conscience has been shaken by the death of the monks, and perhaps still more by the way they had lived. In an extremely simple way, they had lived to the full the Christian witness of love and brotherhood in a Muslim country, and loved to the end. Many Muslims are deeply shaken and moved by the fact that after this terrible crime we can still speak of forgiveness and fraternity!

It is terrible to stand—or hang—with Dom Christian on Golgotha. Yet Dom Christian teaches us, Christians and Muslims alike, that beyond the terror lies the only true *salaam*, or peace. And since Christ's love led Dom Christian so far, should we doubt that such a love (provided we are capable of responding to it!) will lead us to the same place? GEORGE DARDESS

George Dardess teaches English at Allendale Columbia School in Rochester, New York. His essay, "When a Christian Chants the Qur'an," appeared in the January 13, 1995, issue of Commonweal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When philosophers talk about God

Robert J. Egan

Many *Commonweal* readers will remember a time when caring about philosophy seemed an integral part of being a Catholic. With a robust confidence in human reason, Catholics looked to the study of philosophy for answers to many of the most important questions of the age. Authors like Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson were crucial in shaping the intellectual lives of many Catholics earlier in this century.

Before the 1960s, it was philosophy—rather than theology—that provided the organizing principles and theoretical foundations for Catholic higher education in this country. It was philosophy that established the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, the basic principles of a natural moral law, even the existence of God. Philosophy was thought to provide reasonable foundations for the assent and obedience of faith. It also provided many Catholics with a coherent way of thinking and talking about life in a secular and pluralistic society. At a time when theology was thought to be primarily the concern and prerogative of the clergy, Christian philosophy became the ordinary framework of self-understanding for many educated lay Catholics.

All this changed suddenly in the years after the Second Vatican Council. The whole edifice of neoscholasticism seemed to collapse overnight. The postponed questions of a century-and-a-half—questions about human subjectivity, historical consciousness, religious pluralism, the role of experience, and the ideals of democracy—broke over the walls of Catholicism like a tidal wave. Theology entered an exciting period of rediscovery and controversy, reaching a new and surprisingly large audience, while philosophy in the Catholic world, on the other hand, became increasingly technical, specialized, and diversified.

Book discussed in this essay

Is There a God?
Richard Swinburne
Oxford University Press, $19.95, 144 pp.

Major works by Richard Swinburne on the Philosophy of Religion

The Coherence of Theism
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

The Existence of God
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

Faith and Reason
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

The Evolution of the Soul
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Responsibility and Atonement
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

The Christian God
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

***See also*: Reason and the Christian Religion: Essays in Honor of Richard Swinburne**
Padgett, Alan G., ed.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

During these years, the philosophy departments of Catholic colleges and universities welcomed, among others, existentialists, phenomenologists, pragmatists, Hegelians, critical Marxists, Wittgensteinians, Whiteheadians, and transcendental Thomists, all of whom continued to address large issues, but mostly for small, professional audiences. At state schools and most other private universities, in the meantime, philosophy departments were dominated by an Anglo-American analytic tradition which had grown increasingly positivist and either bored by religious faith or openly hostile toward it. At most of these places, the "philosophy of religion," if it was taught at all, was taught as a debunking of the meaning and credibility of traditional religious talk.

Given this situation, Catholics gradually lost their confidence in academic philosophy as an aid in understanding their faith and its prospects in the contemporary world. The mood of most American and Western European philosophy was increasingly secular. While some Catholic theologians continued a dialogue with major figures of Continental thought—Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricœur, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida—few paid much attention to developments in the analytic tradition. And Catholics more generally tended to lose interest in this conversation: whether about language analysis, hermeneutic theory, the fading specter of Marxism, the complexities of deconstruction and postmodernism, or the rise of neopragmatism.

Nevertheless, in the last twenty years, there has been a unexpected revival of interest in the philosophy of religion. Some of this remains detached and distant from its subject matter—curious, ironic, and amused. But interest has also been growing in the subject among some scholars who take religion seriously and treat it with respect. Even among analytic philosophers, some of whom are themselves Christians, thoughtful attention is, here and there, being turned again to questions about religious belief, experience, and practice, including questions about the existence of God. This still remains a minority viewpoint—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many representatives of the mainstream analytic school still cannot bring themselves to believe in human "consciousness," much less in an infinite, eternal personal being. Nevertheless, these developments have somewhat changed the fortunes of philosophy of religion in analytic circles. Many Catholics would be glad to hear the news.

Among these Christian analytic philosophers, Richard Swinburne—since 1985 a professor at the University of Oxford—has been a distinguished, prolific, and influential figure. Swinburne is fully at home in theoretical science and analytic philosophy. He loves argument. He believes in the possibility of purely rational "foundations" for thought. He defends Cartesian dualism. He believes that most Continental philosophy—Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger—is characterized by "a certain sloppiness of argument, a tendency to draw big, vague general pictures of the universe, without spelling them out very precisely or justifying them very thoroughly...." He thinks of all this as "a kind of philosophy nearer to literature than to science." He decided as a young man to use the tools of clarity and rigor to make Christian theology "intellectually respectable again."

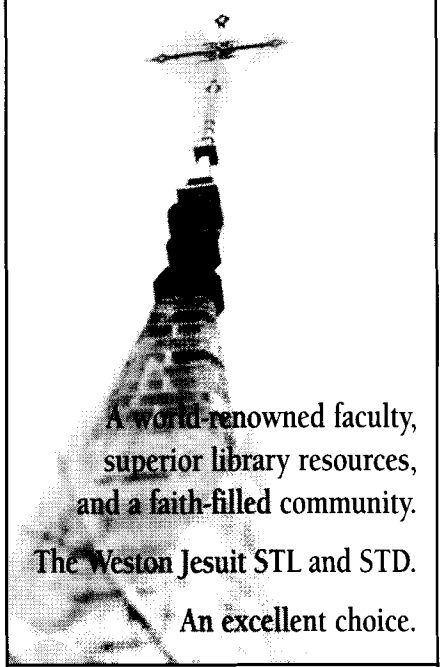
His recent book, *Is There a God?*, is a condensed version of his earlier study, *The Existence of God* (1979). In this work, intended for a wider audience, Swinburne argues against the popular conviction that religious belief is "entirely nonrational" and that the existence of God is, as he puts it, "intellectually, a lost cause." He insists, rather, that science and reason actually provide good grounds for belief in God. In a series of brief, well-focused chapters, he first establishes the meaning and coherence of the idea of God, then establishes appropriate criteria for adequate theories and their justification. Finally, using these criteria, he advances several arguments for positing the existence of God based on various phenomena that seem to him to require such an explanation. Included also is a summary discussion of why God allows evil, a subject Swinburne intends to return to in a future book on Providence.

The core of his argument is a theory of explanation summarized in his second chapter. There he recounts how various investigators—scientists, historians, and detectives—move from observed data to theories that account for the data using certain criteria to conclude that a particular theory is most likely to be true. "Using these same criteria," he says, "we find that the view that there is a God explains *everything* we observe, not just some narrow range of data. It explains the fact that there is a universe at all, that scientific laws operate within it, that it contains conscious animals and humans with very complex intricately organized bodies, that we have abundant opportunities for developing ourselves and the world, as well as the more particular data that humans report miracles and have religious experiences....The very same criteria which scientists use to reach their own theories lead us to move beyond those theories to a creator God who sustains everything in existence."

It is not possible, here, to examine these arguments in detail. They involve a crossing over into the contested and recently somewhat pacified territory between theology and natural science. They invite us back to a way of thinking and talking about God which prescinds from what may be known through particular traditions understood as revelatory and adheres simply to available evidence and the rules of rational argument. American Catholics, who have inherited a strong confidence in philosophy, might well welcome such an invitation. Certainly American Catholic intellectual life has suffered from the loss of this confidence.

Of course, the parameters of rational plausibility in the minds of analytic philosophers (and theoretical physicists) are sometimes difficult for the rest of us to gauge or assess. Swinburne reconstructs the truth claims of Christian faith in ways that he means to seem reasonable, but one well may wonder, to whom? These arguments make sense within some general agreement about reality and how to talk about it, but such an agreement is getting harder to imagine. It is hard for me to see how posit-

Licentiate and Doctorate in Sacred Theology



A world-renowned faculty, superior library resources, and a faith-filled community.

The Weston Jesuit STL and STD.

An excellent choice.

Biblical Studies
Richard J. Clifford, SJ
Daniel J. Harrington, SJ
John S. Kselman, SS
Stanley B. Marrow, SJ

Church History
Francine J. Cardman
Janice S. Farnham, RJM
John W. O'Malley, SJ

Moral Theology
James F. Keenan, SJ
Edward V. Vacek, SJ

Historical and Systematic Theology
Khaled Anatolios
Peter E. Fink, SJ
Roger D. Haight, SJ
Brian O. McDermott, SJ
J. Randall Sachs, SJ

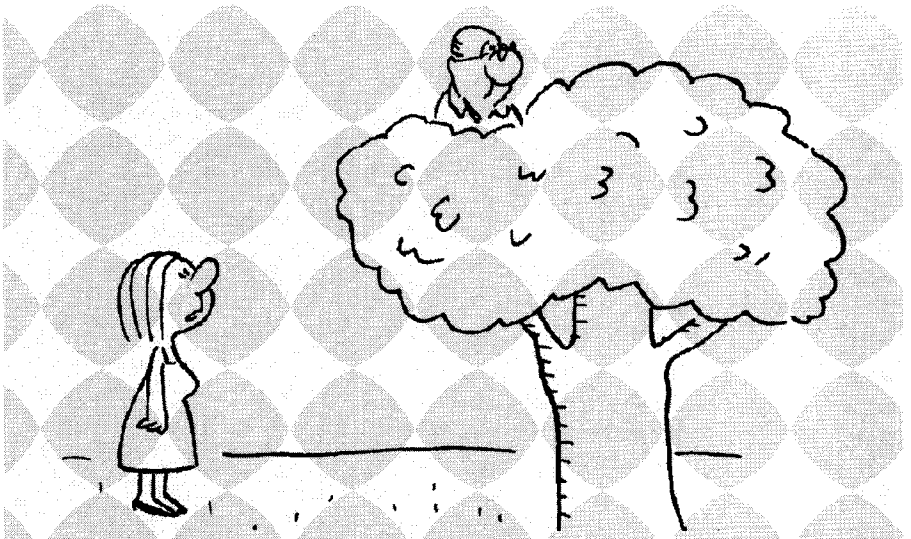
Pastoral Theology
Katherine M. Clarke
Margaret Eletta Guider, OSF
Thomas A. Kane, CSP

Weston Jesuit School of Theology

A Course of Action

For information please write or call:
Mary Pat St. Jean
Director of Admissions
Weston Jesuit School of Theology
3 Phillips Place, Dept. W1
Cambridge, MA 02138-3495
Telephone (617) 492-1960
Fax (617) 492-5833

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"Richard, you know reading Jean-Paul Sartre doesn't agree with you!"

ing the existence of an infinite, eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent person can ever be called a simple hypothesis that explains anything, much less *everything*. To me it seems strange, extravagant, unnerving. It is hard for me to see how God can be discussed at all without reference to mystery, awe, or the hard, harrowing work of love, or how the word "God" can be given all these particular meanings—or even *any* meaning—outside specific traditions of religious practice, experience, and symbolism. And it is very hard for me to understand how questions like "Why is there anything rather than nothing?" can be asked from the perspective of a detached observer.

"The conclusion of this book," Swinburne writes, "is that the existence, orderliness, and fine-tunedness of the world; the existence of conscious humans within it with providential opportunities for molding themselves, each other, and the world; some historical evidence of miracles in connection with human needs and prayers, particularly in connection with the foundation of Christianity, topped off finally by the apparent experience by millions of his presence, all make it significantly more probable than not that there is a God."

I doubt that many atheists or agnostics will find these arguments compelling. But even for many believers today, the possibility of true and compelling speech about God has come to seem more complicated, ambiguous, and circuitous than Swinburne's argument allows. Can we imagine the relationship between words and things in such a straightforward and confident way? Can the step to the reality of immortal souls or the existence of an infinite person ever really be so neatly calculated? Can God-talk really be evaluated without reference to the communities of discourse bearing these traditions and learning its sense and relevance from their struggles, suffering, and longing?

In fact, philosophical reflection on the meaning and truth of religion is moving in several different directions at the present time. It is again an exciting and exacting discipline. Many are advocating a more comparative approach to the philosophy of religion at long last, insisting that examples must be drawn from many different world views—Taoist, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and others. Many are insisting that speech about God must always be tied more closely to the interpretation of sacred texts and images, to the formation of certain kinds of character, and to particular traditions of communal religious practice. Many believe that authentic speech about God must always have a mystagogical dimension—must be a speaking which itself leads to repentance, illumination, gratitude: to an *experience* of God. And others would insist that the God worshiped by Jews, Christians, and Muslims can be spoken of truthfully only in conjunction with the struggles of the poor and victims of injustice to change the circumstances of their lives and to envision a future with hope. Others will question the force of any arguments of the kind Swinburne puts forward in the radically pluralistic, ambiguous, postmodern situation of our own culture.

For all that, there is much that is moving and admirable in this elegantly stated and thoughtful book, which gives voice in these complex times to a confident and serene experience of Christian faith deeply in harmony with scientific investigation, wide learning, and rigorous argument. Even those who find this way of arguing about God not fully persuasive can admire the beauty and integrity of this experience. □

Robert J. Egan, S.J., *a frequent contributor to* Commonweal, *teaches theology and spirituality at Saint Michael's Institute and Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.*

"Experimenting with tradition since 1898..."

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT
THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS
AND SISTERS OF THE ATONEMENT
AND THEIR ASSOCIATES,
CONTACT: VOCATION DIRECTOR,
GRAYMOOR, P.O. BOX 300, GARRISON, NY 10524-0300

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PROMISED LAND?

God Has Ninety-Nine Names
Reporting from a Militant Middle East
Judith Miller
Simon & Schuster, $30, 574 pp.

Jack Fischel

Until last year's election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister and the return of the Likud party to power, one could celebrate the disappearance of a monolithic hostility to the Jewish state in the Middle East. Thanks to the peace process that had begun with Camp David and reached a climax in the famous "handshake" between Itzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat on the White House lawn, Israel made its peace with at least one of its oldest nemeses, the forces of both Arab and Palestinian nationalism. The PLO even voted to change its charter calling for the elimination of Israel. There is, however, another Middle East. That other Middle East still refuses to reconcile itself to the existence of Israel and views any peace with the Jewish state as an affront to Islam.

This is the Middle East of Khomeini-inspired fundamentalism, the subject of *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller's indispensable volume. In examining the status of fundamentalism in ten Islamic countries, Miller concludes that there is no Muslim Comintern or "Khomeintern." Rather, as the book's title suggests, Islam takes many forms throughout the region and is far from being the monolithic movement that is suggested by a cursory reading of the press. That's the good news. The bad news is that, regardless of the differences among Sunni and Shiite Muslims, those who identify with Islamic fundamentalism agree that Israel must be destroyed.

Miller describes how in Lebanon she found children, no more than five or six years old, being taught the virtues of martyrdom and being told that in the war against Israel, "when they are older, they may have the honor of dying for Islam." In Syria, Miller is given a handbook for teachers instructing them to tell their students that the "liberation of the land occupied in 1967" was an "intermediate goal." In Damascus, she found non-Syrian militant Islamic groups such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad given protection by the Syrian government. One Israeli official told Miller in October 1994, less than three months before President Bill Clinton's meeting with Syria's President Assad, that orders for a suicide bomber to blow up a bus in the streets of Tel Aviv during the morning rush hour had been issued from Damascus. Although Assad may one day meaningfully negotiate with Israel, Miller tells us that it is more than the return of the Golan Heights that prevents him from making peace with the Jewish state.

How could the leader who, in 1966, declared that Syria would never call for nor accept peace, that he would "drench this land with our blood to oust you aggressors, and throw you into the sea for good," now cozy up to Washington and fly the Israeli flag in Damascus? Preparing Syrians for the reversal of what had been an ideological pillar of his Baathist regime would not be easy.

Despite Syria's intransigence and Iran's promotion of terrorism, the major change in the Middle East since the peace process unfolded is that Israel is not alone in fighting militant Islam. Iran's effort to export its Islamic revolution has succeeded only in the Sudan, Miller points out. Israel is, *de facto*, allied with the Saudis, the Egyptians, and other Arab countries in confronting the efforts of Hezbollah and other groups to overthrow Arab regimes and in the process destroy the normalization of relations between Israel and her neighbors.

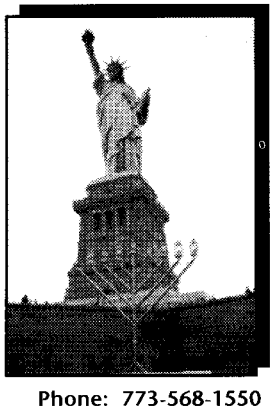
Does Likud's victory and its subsequent hard line toward the Palestinians mean that Israel has squandered an opportunity to build on the changes the Oslo Accords brought about in the region's political climate? Miller's book was written before the recent elections in Israel, but the tone of her argument suggests that for Israel to renege on the agreements reached at Oslo concerning the autonomy of the West Bank would

Forthcoming May 1997

RELIGION AND STATE
IN THE AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE
JONATHAN D. SARNA AND DAVID G. DALIN, EDITORS

Religion and State in the American Jewish Experience makes available for the first time critical documents that have shaped debates over religion and state issues throughout the course of American Jewish history.

368 pages • ISBN 0-268-01654-2 • $40.00 cloth



Contact your local bookstore or order direct from:
UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME PRESS
Chicago Distribution Center
11030 South Langley Avenue, Chicago, IL 60628
Phone: 773-568-1550
Fax: 800-621-8476

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

result in a major victory for Islamic extremists and a renewal of the potent linkage between religious zealotry and nationalism in a common front against the Jewish state.

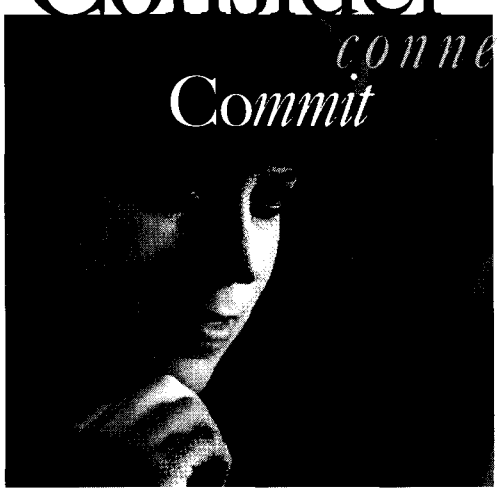
Israelis may have forgotten that prior to the Rabin-led peace process, it was waging a battle against both Arab nationalism and Muslim fundamentalism. After the Oslo Accords, two distinct attitudes arose in regard to the Jewish state: one willing to accept the legitimacy of Israel and the other even more committed to destroying it. The Bush-Baker plan of "land for peace" attracted the pragmatic Rabin for principally two reasons. Against the background of the *intifada*, Rabin realized that negotiations with the Palestinians without the PLO would go nowhere. He also understood the currents of Islamic fundamentalism and the growing appeal of groups such as Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza. Miller concludes that Rabin believed that, if some kind of agreement were not reached with the PLO, the forces of militant Islam were waiting in the wings to take over the fight against Israel.

For the PLO the road to Madrid and Oslo was equally difficult. The breakup of the Soviet Union had left the PLO without a major power as sponsor. In addition, the PLO had sided with Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War, and as a consequence the Saudis cut off aid to the organization. It was also apparent that the *intifada* was not under the direction or control of the PLO. From his headquarters in Tunis, Arafat watched Hamas attempt to take over the leadership of the *intifada* and appeal to the younger generation of Palestinians. Arafat concluded that the Palestinian movement was slowly slipping away from the PLO. Thus, despite the Palestine National Covenant, which has traditionally rejected the legitimacy of the Jewish state and, in fact, has called for its destruction, Arafat moved an uncertain PLO into the peace process. Of course as the negotiations unfolded, it became clear that Rabin and Arafat had different expectations. For Arafat, the process would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state. Rabin gambled that the negotiations would lead to autonomy for the Palestinians but not statehood, which he believed would have a destabilizing effect on the region. Yet by September 1995, the Rabin government had agreed to cede Palestinian autonomy to most of the Arab-populated cities in the West Bank. Under the new Likud government, this commitment to Palestinian autonomy would seem to be on hold. If so, the future of the peace process is in doubt.

Future peace will depend on both the policies of the Likud government and on which of the two faces of the Middle East triumphs in the struggle for the hearts and minds of millions of Arabs. It is apparent from Miller's book that thanks to the Oslo Accords Israel had acquired Arab partners for peace and was no longer a pariah in the region. Can that partnership survive the current confrontational period? If it does not, the forces of militant Islam will be waiting. □

Jack Fischel *teaches history at Millersville University in Pennsylvania.*

Consider
connect
Commit



Washington Theological Union offers a rare mix of theology, ministry, and spirituality for individuals, **lay** and **religious**, in search of a renewed sense of personal and professional fulfillment.

The Union helps students connect their faith with the needs of others. Students develop a deepened commit
ment to ministry around the world.

The Union's location offers easy access to Washington's exceptional academic, cultural, and political resources. On-site residence and financial assistance are available.

The Union offers M. Div. and M.A. degrees, Graduate Certificates, and Sabbatical Programs.

To **consider** how Washington Theological Union can help you **connect** your faith and **commitment** to ministry call 800-334-9922, ext. 5210 today.

Washington Theological Union

A Roman Catholic School for Ministry
6896 Laurel Street NW • Washington, DC 20012

WTCCCW21

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Continued from page 4)

these fields, in the same way women are bringing their experiences into the pulpit.

Woodward approvingly cites Walter Ong's belief that an all-male clergy is a necessary countervailing force in a church that is "always and overwhelmingly feminine." I am bothered by the implicit definitions of "masculine" and "feminine" that seem to be in play in Woodward's interpretation of Father Ong's work, suggesting (without quite saying) that only men can maintain authority and professional standards, and only women can act for the church in its nurturing role.

This way of defining is also confining. Why not accept that both women and men can serve in a variety of roles throughout the spectrum of church-based activities, whether those roles call for exercising authority or providing nurture?

AILEEN M. FITZKE
Irvine, Calif.

The author replies:

Whenever I see the words "patriarchal, hierarchical, and dualistic" employed mantra-like in the same sentence I know I am in the presence of ideology. My point was that the homely facts of ordinary church life contradict the ideology that Ms. Fitzke invokes as an explanation for what I observe. I do not see this "model" breaking down because I don't see that the model to which Ms. Fitzke alludes exists in any significant way except in the particular form the Mormons have given it.

Regarding women in the clergy, their numbers do not intimidate but instruct. When it comes to clergy I am of the Mae West school: Not only is a good man hard to find but the opposite is also true. Nowhere do I suggest that women who are middle-aged, divorced, or single mothers are immature (though most never-married single mothers are, in fact, adolescents); my point, rather, is that the Protestant ministry is attracting a dangerously disproportionate number of people who are embracing it after failing in other dimensions of their lives. Maturity is a matter of character, competence, and commitment (as I mentioned in a piece in these pages some years ago), and the future of the Christian ministry is not bright when people—male or female—enter seminary in an effort to "find" themselves.

I stand by my remarks regarding the differences between the ministry and other professions. Feminist organizations, like other advocacy groups, may use female attorneys, but they had better be good lawyers first or they will not do the movement any good. The same is true of physicians. Advocates may call attention to things like breast cancer, but I find no evidence that women are better than men at treating breast cancer, only that for obvious reasons many women so afflicted prefer to be treated by physi-

PASSAGE TO MINISTRY

Saint Mary of-the-Woods College

Master of Arts in

Pastoral Theology

External Degree Format

- Learn basic theological concepts and methods related to ministry.
- Apply knowledge and skills in a chosen ministry.
- Develop personal spirituality.
- Three weekends and one eight-day summer session each year are the only on-campus requirements.
- Year-round communication with professors.

For more information contact:
Graduate Office — Guerin Hall
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods,
IN 47876-1099
(812) 535-5206

"I have a deep faith in God and have been active in my parish. I needed an opportunity for pastoral study, but could not attend weekly classes. Saint Mary of-the-Woods was perfect for me."

—Kenneth Siarkiewicz
Rome, New York

"My MAPT experience enabled me to become more credible and confident in my work, opening doors of opportunity for pastoral ministry beyond my imagining."

— Karen Oddi,
Indianapolis, Indiana

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cians of the same sex.

Nowhere do I or Father Ong suggest that "only men can maintain authority and professional standards," or that only women can "act for the church in its nurturing role." On the contrary, the evidence suggests that the men called to the pastoral ministry are likely to be those who have a strong capacity for and need to nurture. What I did do is cite evidence (especially from Rebecca Chopp) that shows the extent to which women entering the ministry dislike, avoid, and oppose the exercise of clerical authority, especially when it is tied to hierarchy. On the other hand, women in business have shown that they can be as avid as men in embracing the corporate ladder; it is only in the ministry that they tend to avoid the ladder altogether. Which is easy, since American Protestantism has always been notoriously antihierarchical.

In short, a model can't break down if it doesn't exist in the first place. American religion was essentially woman's domain long before the rise of contemporary feminism. That's an inconvenient fact that feminist ideology refuses to acknowledge.

KENNETH L. WOODWARD

BOSTON COLLEGE

The "Institute" at Boston College:
A place where the church does its thinking.

- DISCOVER BOSTON AND HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND
- FLEXIBLE PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR STUDY
- ENRICHING LITURGICAL AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES
- CONTINUING EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND LITURGY CERTIFICATES
- M.A., M.A./M.S.W., AND M.Ed., C.A.E.S. AND PH.D IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
- GENEROUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND GRADUATE STUDENT HOUSING

SESSION ONE: June 23-July 3

Shawn Copeland	Foundations in Theology
Thomas Groome	A "Catholic" Spirituality for Educators and Pastoral Ministers
Richard Gula	Foundations in Moral Theology
Michael Himes	Ecclesiology
Bruce Morrill	Theology of Christian Initiation
Stephen Pope	Prophets and Mystics

SESSION TWO: July 7-July 18

Maryanne Confoy	Faith, Conversion, and the Search for the Transcendent
Gustavo Gutierrez and James Nickoloff	The Spirituality of Liberation Theology
Daniel Harrington	The Book of Revelation
Alice Laffey	Introduction to the Old Testament
Michael St. Clair	Psychological Foundations for Pastoral Counseling

OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION: July 7-18

Conference style: including workshops, sight-seeing tours and social events

Bernard Cooke	*Changing Ministries in a Changing Church (July 7-11) *Theological Guidelines for Ministry (July 14-18) (non-conference week) **Continuing education or credit*

SESSION THREE: July 21-August 1

William Dych	Catholic Christianity for the New Millennium
Janice Farnham	Lay Ministry: Historical Paradigms & Pastoral Practice
Claire Lowery	Theology and Pastoral Practice
Sharon Daloz Parks	The Formation of Faith, Imagination, and Commitment for a Complex World
Jane Regan	Educating in Faith
Paul Ritt	Christology
Robert VerEecke	Sacred and Liturgical Dance Study Program: *Dance and the Sacred (two-week course)* *Liturgical Dance: Form and Content (two-week workshop)*

Boston College

For information, contact:

Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry
Department R
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167
800-487-1167 or 617-552-8440
http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/acavp/irepm/irepm.html

SUMMER 1997

CLASSIFIED

RATES: $1.10 per word; 12 word minimum. Discounts 5 percent, 3 times; 10 percent, 6 times; 15 percent, 12 times. Advance payment required. Discounts and monthly billing available for repeat advertisers. For additional information call 212-732-0800 or write COMMONWEAL, 15 Dutch St., Room 502, New York, NY 10038-3760.

Conference

THE COMMUNAL, ECOLOGICAL & FEMININE—April 4–12, 1997. Come join a conversation between the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and three contemporary voices: the Communal, Ecological, and Feminine. For information contact: Secretary, Loyola House, Box 245, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1H 6J9. Tel: 519-824-1250, Ext. 266. Fax: 519-767-0994.

Manuscripts Wanted

MANUSCRIPTS WANTED. ALL TYPES. Subsidy Publisher with 75-year tradition. 1-800-695-9599.

Lecturer at Large

HAVE SPEECHES, WILL TRAVEL Rome-based author/reporter seeks lecture assignments to help finance a trip to the U.S. in April or May in connection with the publication by Loyola University Press of my latest book, *The Turned Card: Christianity before and after the Wall*, described by the Rev. Andrew Greeley as "the best and most sophisticated book" on the experience of certain heroic Christians living in Central and Eastern Europe under communism and after its collapse. The book has been translated into six languages. I've lectured on Italian politics and culture and other subjects at universities and in other settings in Australia, Italy, and Spain. Another topic: Vatican diplomacy, especially in relation to Cuba and East Timor, both of which I've visited. Write: **Desmond O'Grady, via B. Gosio 77, 00191 Rome, Italy; telephone & fax 011/39/6/3332186.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMEN! IN SH' ALLAH!

Christian de Chergé

What follows is the testament of a Trappist priest killed by members of the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria in May 1996. The document was composed at the end of 1993, following the priest's previous abduction by the same group. Anticipating possible martyrdom, Father de Chergé sent the testament to his family. After his death, it was published in La Croix *on May 28, 1996.*

If it were ever to happen—and it could happen any day—that I should be the victim of the terrorism that seems to be engulfing all the foreigners now living in Algeria, I would like my community, my church, my family to remember that my life was given to God and to this country.

That they accept that the unique Master of all life will be no stranger to such a brutal departure.

That they pray for me: for how should I prove worthy of such an offering?

That they understand that such a death should be linked to so many others, equally violent, but which remain masked by the anonymity of indifference.

My life has no greater worth than that of another.

Nor is it worth any less.

In all events, it no longer has the innocence of childhood.

I have lived long enough to recognize that I am caught up as accomplice in the evil which, alas, seems to prevail in the world, even in that evil which might strike me blindly.

At such a moment I would like to have enough lucidity left to beg God's pardon and that of all my fellow human beings, while pardoning with all my heart anyone who might have hurt me.

Not that I would want to wish such a death.

It seems important to profess that.

In fact, I do not see how I could rejoice that this people that I love should be globally blamed for my murder.

It is far more costly to pay the price of what might be called "the grace of martyrdom" than to owe one's life to an Algerian, whoever he may be, especially if he professes to be acting in accord with what he believed in Islam.

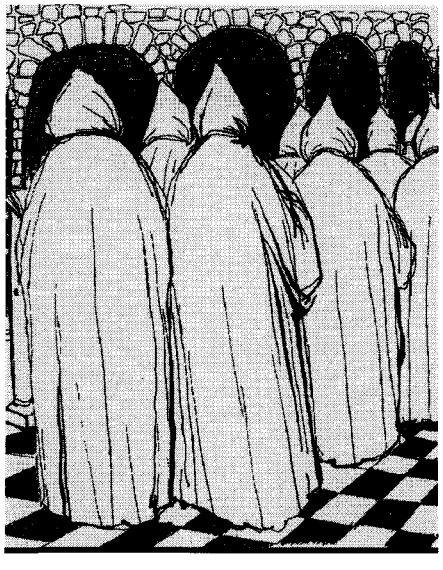
I know full well the contempt in which Algerians generally are held.

I know, too, the caricature of Islam that is fostered by a certain Islamism.

It is all too easy to appease one's conscience by simply identifying this religious tradition with the all-or-nothingness of the extremists.

For me, Islam and Algeria is something different, it is body and soul.

I have proclaimed it loud and clear, I believe, to everyone who knows me, that I have found here the guiding line of the gospel that I learned at my mother's knee, my first church, here in Algeria, and in the respect of Muslim believers.



My death would seem to justify those who dismiss me summarily as naïve, as an idealist [saying]: "Let him say how he sees things now!"

But they ought to know that at last my pounding curiosity will be satisfied.

For then I shall be able, if it pleases God, to steep my gaze in that which the Father has, to contemplate with him his Islamic children as he sees them, illuminated by the glory of Christ, by the fruits of his Passion, endowed with the gift of the Spirit, whose secret joy will be forever to establish communion and to restore likeness, through playing on differences.

This life lost, totally mine, and totally theirs, I give thanks to God, who seems to have wanted it to be utterly so, for this joy, through and despite everything.

Within this thank you where, once and for all, all is said about my life, I include you, my friends of yesterday and of today, and you, my friends from here, along with my mother and my father, my sisters and my brothers and all who belong to them, [life] yielded a hundredfold as was promised!

And you, too, my last-minute friend, you who know not what you do.

Yes, for you, too, I wish this thank you, and this *adieu* which is of your planning.

May we be granted to meet each other again, happy thieves, in paradise, should it please God, the Father of both of us. Amen! *In sh' Allah*! □

Dom Christian de Chergé, O.C.S.O., *was the prior of Our Lady of Atlas Monastery in Tibherine, Algeria. He and six other Trappist monks were slain by terrorists in May 1996.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CELEBRATE A FAMOUS MONUMENT OF ANTIQUITY!

ROBERT HOYT ON HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY!

For tickets, clip and return with payment to:
Commonweal
15 Dutch Street, Room 502
New York, NY 10038

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____

Number of tickets requested:
Symposium only tickets @ $20 _____
Full program & dinner tickets @ $100 _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED